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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

## **Monterey, California**



## **THESIS**

**THE HORIZONTAL ASPECT OF DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-  
MILITARY RELATIONS – THE CASE OF HUNGARY**

by

Ferenc Molnar

June 2002

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Thomas Bruneau  
Jeffrey W. Knopf

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**THE HORIZONTAL ASPECT OF DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY  
RELATIONS – THE CASE OF HUNGARY**

Ferenc Molnar  
Lieutenant Colonel, Hungarian Army  
B.A., ELTE University of Budapest, 1993

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The argument of this thesis is that the early success of building DCMR does not mean real consolidation without active non-governmental actors and a dynamic civil society. Drawing attention to the non-state side of civil-military relations is crucial to improving the quality of DCMR.

The thesis claims, that the horizontal dimension of the Hungarian CMR has undergone a long and complex learning process. Nevertheless, the civil society component of the Hungarian CMR received less attention and its development was slow and controversial. This process is shown by the case of three types of NGOs (protest, research and educator, and cultural organizations) in Hungary between the late 1980s and 2002.

Today tendencies are promising because these organizations are more diverse than earlier and the emerging economy could provide additional resources for them. Nevertheless, the state support for improving this activity remains very important but it calls for considering increasingly democratic values. Furthermore, the current status of the defense- and military-related civil society calls for promotion from NATO and the European Union as well. It would be important increasing the attractiveness this field and as a result the civilian participation in it, which could be the basis of the improvement of the quality of democratic civil-military relations.



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The argument of this thesis is that the early success of building DCMR does not mean real consolidation without active non-governmental actors and a dynamic civil society. Drawing attention to the non-state side of civil-military relations is crucial to improving the quality of DCMR in Hungary, and probably in general as well. The “horizontal actors” of civil-military relations could provide independent experts, or at least relatively independent experts other than the political parties’ experts, for monitoring certain areas of civil-military relations. These organizations could be potential sources for civilian experts and could help decrease the level of corruption and the nonfunctional effects of political/bureaucratic coalition building between civilians and military leaders. In other words, it would improve the effective control of civilians over the military. Additionally, its role is to prevent the further alienation of citizens on military-related issues. Thus, a stronger horizontal dimension to CMR would also improve military integration into society.

The thesis claims, that the horizontal dimension of the Hungarian CMR has undergone a long and complex learning process. Nevertheless, the civil society component of the Hungarian CMR received less attention from experts and its development was slow and controversial. This process is shown by the case of three types of NGOs (protest, research and educator, and cultural organizations) in Hungary between the late 1980s and 2002.

Today tendencies are promising because these organizations are more diverse than earlier and the emerging economy could provide additional resources for them. Nevertheless, the state support for improving this activity remained very important but it calls for considering increasingly democratic values instead of short-term political party benefits. Furthermore, the status today of the defense- and military-related civil society calls for promotion from NATO and the European Union as well. It would be important increasing the attractiveness this field and as a result the (non-political) civilian participation in it, which could be the basis of the improvement of the quality of democratic civil-military relations.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The role of civil society in the transition from a non-democratic to a democratic system has been crucial in many countries. In fact, civil society played an important role in Hungary during its transition just as in other Central European countries.<sup>1</sup> However, after the transition period some experts complained about the weakness of civil society and its organizations because of their lack of control over the state bureaucracy. Other experts do not share this opinion and point to the numerous civil organizations created after communism. However, very few of the NGOs are able to mobilize the masses for political purposes.<sup>2</sup> Beyond these debates, it is generally accepted that a dynamic civil society is an important “arena” in a democracy. Therefore, it is important to examine it. There is also a widely shared opinion that the part of civil society dealing with defense-related issues is very weak in Hungary.

This weakness matters because, another significant issue is the building of democratic civil-military relations (DCMR) after communism. This was vital in the post-communist countries where during communism the military was definitely subordinate to politics, or more exactly to the Communist Party. Obviously, controlling the military and the other armed organizations has been crucial during the transition to democracy because the authoritarian system used these forces to ensure not only external stability but internal stability as well.

The institutional and legal foundations concerning democratic control of the military were mainly created during the early phase of the transitions, but effective democratic control over the national armed forces has been lacking. The deficiencies have led to so-called “second generation” reforms<sup>3</sup> for consolidating the structure and the

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<sup>1</sup> Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992) 2-3; Andrew Arato, *From Neo-Marxism to Democratic Theory: Essays on the Critical Theory of Soviet-Type Societies* (New York: M.E. Sharpe 1993) 296-309; Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) 7.

<sup>2</sup> András Körösi: *A magyar politikai rendszer (The Hungarian Political System)* (Budapest: Osiris, 1998) 163.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Forster, Timothy Edmunds and Andrew Cottey, “The Second Generation Problematic: Rethinking Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Central and Eastern Europe” (*Civil-Military Relations in Central and eastern Europe*, TCMR 1.7, Internet Resource Centre, 2000) 11-12 <http://civil-military.dsd.kcl.ac.uk/>.



working mechanisms. During these “second generation” reforms, Hungary and its Western supporters should be concerned with encouraging a defense-related civil society to be a core component of DCMR.

DCMR is more than state legislative and executive control over the military. Democratic control contains elements from non-governmental organizations and from civil society as well as from military organizations. The relations between the branches of state power and the military structure embody the most significant part of civil-military relations. At the same time, the state alone is not able to accomplish the democratization of civil-military relations, and also is not able to satisfy all the requirements of DCMR.

The argument of this thesis is that the early success of building DCMR does not mean real consolidation without active non-governmental actors and a dynamic civil society. Drawing attention to the non-state side of civil-military relations is crucial to improving the quality of DCMR in Hungary, and probably in general as well. The “horizontal actors”<sup>4</sup> of civil-military relations could provide independent experts, or at least relatively independent experts other than the political parties’ experts, for monitoring certain areas of civil-military relations. These organizations could be potential sources for civilian experts and could help decrease the level of corruption and the nonfunctional effects of political/bureaucratic coalition building between civilians and military leaders. In other words, it would improve the effective control of civilians over the military. Additionally, its role is to prevent the further alienation of citizens on military-related issues. Thus, a stronger horizontal dimension to CMR would also improve military integration into society. The horizontal aspect of DCMR has not been as effectively influenced by NATO and EU enlargement as has other aspects.

Examining the quality of civil-military relations calls for research on the civil society component. It is important in Hungary for the following reasons:

- Most of the illegal and semi-legal groups in civil society in the communist era converted to become actors in the political system during the democratic transition.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the defense-oriented civil society did

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<sup>4</sup> Hans Born, *Multiple Control and the Armed Forces in Democracies: The Case of the Netherlands* (Manuscript, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> A part of the illegal civil movements became political parties and so leaders of the civil society politicians during the democratic transition.

not exist during communism. There was thus little military expertise within the non-state actors in Hungary after the transition.

- The lack of transparency of the Hungarian military also emphasizes the need for non-governmental actors. Although clear regulations about the decision-making process are able to guarantee political oversight of the military, the lack of civilian experts and the coalition building between civilian and military bureaucrats draws attention to the importance of the non-governmental actors. The lack of civilian experts has caused problems such as military dominance in the Ministry of Defense and politicization of the military elite. Some non-governmental organizations can be a source of civilian experts, while some can contribute to keeping the state bureaucracy accountable.
- Hungarian civil-military relations also suffer from the existing gap between society and the military. Communism decimated society and therefore severed the conventional forms of civil-military relations. The democratic transition eliminated communist-type organizations. The relationship between society and the military is changing in the post-cold war era. Reconciling this relationship calls for new solutions. Certain non-state actors could play a significant role.
- The conditions of the horizontal aspect of DCMR depend on domestic circumstances, but external players, such as NATO, the EU, and the international NGOs have also influenced its development. These organizations have directly and indirectly influenced the non-state side of civil-military relations but the effect of these activities is not obvious and has not previously been examined.

The thesis contains six chapters including the introduction (Chapter I) and the conclusion (Chapter VI). Chapter II defines democratic civil-military relations and emphasizes the significance of the “horizontal” actors. It also describes the potential forms or types of organizations as well as their roles in DCMR. The next three chapters trace the development of Hungarian CMR chronologically. Each historical chapter covers a different governing cycle (1990-94, 1994-98, and 1998-2002). This organization was chosen because the significant effects of governments in the Hungarian parliamentary system led to important changes when the ruling parties changed in 1994 and 1998. Governments’ policies have been obviously important concerning CMR, but also concerning the civil society because they could introduce laws (using their majority in the parliament). These decisions related to forming, regulating, and cooperating with the civil society. Each chapter starts with an overview describing the main features of the Hungarian civil-military relations during the years in question. It continues in discussing

the development of civil society and describes the influences that guide three types of organizations: protest, national defense-culture-related, and “think-tank-like” organizations.

The conclusion highlights that the Hungarian CMR-related structures and procedures underwent a remarkable learning process during three governing cycles. Nevertheless, the development of the horizontal dimension of CMR was relatively slow and controversial. The polemic nature of the development of the horizontal actors is linked to the strong dependence on state financial resources. The result is that most of the military-related NGOs serve the military and the state and hardly control it. The conclusion also underlines that military-related civil society calls for promotion from NATO and the European Union for increasing the attractiveness this field and as a result the civilian participation in it, which could be the basis of the improvement of the quality of democratic civil-military relations.

The methodology used for this thesis contains theoretical and descriptive elements. The next chapter is normative and is based on academic literature analysis. The following descriptive chapters are based on literature, journal and primary source analysis including documents, NGOs’ Internet homepages, and interviews.

## II. DCMR AND NON-STATE ACTORS

Understanding civil-military relations, or its narrower meaning of civilian control, was not a smooth process in the former communist countries. On the one hand, the western terminology was brand new, and on the other hand, the messages were not always clearly stated at the beginning of the democratic transition. During the 1990s, there were debates in Central and Eastern Europe about the meaning of civil-military relations or civilian control. Extreme interpretations occurred from time to time, and it has taken time to reach the proper interpretation.

One of the extreme interpretations did not consider civilian control to be democratic, and narrowed its meaning to the duty of top civilian leaders concerning the military. Furthermore, many times this duty was considered to be just a checking function. Naturally, these misperceptions of democratic control led to a misperception on the military side as well. The military feared a new type of commissar system resulting again in political instead of professional requirements for their careers. These earlier weak interpretations have since been eliminated in the long learning process since 1989. However, a strictly state-centric approach, which rarely considers other democratic actors besides elected state officials and their institutions, has remained popular.

However, some in the West initiated the other extreme, or the idea of a politically sterile military. The oversimplification of the separation of the political and the military subsystem, using Huntington's definitive work *The Soldier and the State*, resulted in a concept where the military merely obeyed politicians. This interpretation did not consider that the military has its own values and interests and is not just simply a recipient of political decisions, but was also an influential actor in the decision making process. Although democratically elected civilian authorities have used military experts since the first day after the free elections, the realization that the military would pursue its own interests took time.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Stefan Sarvas, "Professional Soldiers and Politics: A Case of Central and Eastern Europe", *Armed Forces and Society*, Fall 1999.

At the same time, the usefulness of the “praetorian” lesson was very limited because, at least in Hungary, the military was not heavily involved in the different subsystems of society, as in Portugal or Latin America. Rather, the military was politicized and controlled by the communist party down to the very last soldier. Moreover, in Hungary, and in Czechoslovakia, the military was rather alienated from society and the military itself was demoralized to a certain degree by the end of the 1980s. It was alienated because it embodied communist and Soviet rather than national traditions and represented the authoritarian system. It was demoralized because the officers were not motivated properly. The military assets were amortized, working conditions declined, and professional soldiers were forced to stay in the military by unfair contracts while the civilian sector offered better ways of living for them.<sup>7</sup>

These post-communist experiences show that civil-military relations in democratic countries differ according to their democratic systems, their political and military traditions, their societal conditions, and last, but not least, the current mindsets in a given country. Scholars have made efforts to create theories and methodologies capable of describing the most effective forms of democratic civil-military relations and of ascertaining the current reality and trends of civil-military relations. These efforts were motivated by “malfunctions” such as coups, by the Cold War, and by the third wave of democratization. As part of the latter, post-communist democratization definitely encouraged these efforts.

Western scientists, schools and institutions launched new projects about civil-military relations during the post-communist transition. As it has turned out, none of the Western democracies has been able to offer a clear path for post-communist countries because of the different social, historical, political and economical circumstances in the former Soviet bloc. Furthermore, neither the existing theories, nor the lesson of democratization of “praetorian” states, could provide satisfactory tools for ex-communist countries which are so different in so many ways.

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<sup>7</sup> In 1985, many cadets left the military right after the graduation at military colleges and refused to serve as officers due to the worsening working and living conditions. The scandal failed to achieve any real solutions. Instead, it became almost impossible for career soldiers to leave the military in the future until the change of regime. That was one of the reasons why thousands of these career soldiers left the military during the transition when restrictions were withdrawn and downsizing was a declared aim.

All of this has created a rather confusing situation concerning civil-military relations and many research projects have been initiated in this field. Numerous projects and institutions created since 1989 have as a goal the successful democratization of post-communist civil-military relations or even just moving forward with western concepts and theories.

Although there is no one magic way to develop “good” civil-military relations, since it is not a puzzle with just one correct solution, defining the most important democratic requirement was vital for the emerging democracies and to the mature democracies as well. It was important for the new democracies because it was a fundamental step in understanding and building a democratic system. It was also an essential problem for donor democracies because they wanted to influence and control this process while they rediscovered their own traditional differences and their own dilemmas in this field.<sup>8</sup>

#### **A.     DEFINING DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

Dealing with the particular questions of Hungarian civil-military relations, it is worthwhile to summarize the overall meaning and the requirements of democratic civil-military relations. According to Peter Feaver, civil-military relations encompass the entire range of relationships between the military and society at every level.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the most significant parts of the literature deal with civilian control of the military and with the relationship between society and the armed forces. The vast majority of the civilian control studies focus on the democratic way of directing and checking the armed forces.

The fundamental question has been what kind of “solutions” democracies have used to control the military. The question has been “ever-relevant” since Plato, because the military, as the very institution created to protect the state, is given sufficient power to

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<sup>8</sup> Peter D. Feaver, “The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control” *Armed Forces and Society*, Winter 1996, 149-178; Douglas L. Bland, “A Unified Theory Of Civil-Military Relations” *Armed Forces and Society*, Fall 1999, 7-26.

<sup>9</sup> Peter D. Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations” *Annual Reviews Political Science*, 1999. 2. 211.

become a threat to the state.<sup>10</sup> The standard democratic answer to this question requires the following institutional and societal conditions<sup>11</sup>:

- A democratically elected body (parliament, congress) has to appropriately decide essential questions such as the roles and missions of the military, the defense budget, the proper size of the armed forces, the type of organization (compulsory military service vs. an all voluntary force) of the military, and the arms acquisitions.
- The rule of law has to define the roles of the branches of state power and the military concerning defense matters. It has to guarantee that neither the executive power nor the military can use the armed forces for its own, particular purpose.
- The hierarchical responsibility of the military to the government must be established through a civilian organization of public administration (Ministry or Department of Defense) charged with control over the military.
- A democratically educated and socialized military, which knows the democratic rules and accept the primacy of civilian authorities, must be created and maintained.
- A part of the civil society (self-organized, independent groups) and a wide range of other non-governmental organizations (think-tanks, media, etc.) have to focus on defense and/or security matters.

These democratic conditions mean that there are three specific aspects of democratic control over the armed forces. The first is “vertical control,”<sup>12</sup> which refers to legislative, juridical and executive control. The second is “horizontal control” embodied in non-governmental actors. The third is the self-control of the military in accordance with the democratic values, norms and attitudes of the military.<sup>13</sup>

The efforts in new democracies and also the efforts of their advisers from established Western democracies primarily focused on the first aspect of democratic control over the military. This was true in both the so-called former “praetorian” states and in the former communist countries as well. The vertical aspect was given priority for

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<sup>10</sup> P. Fever: 213.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from: Rudolf Joó, *The Democratic Control of the Armed Forces: The Experience of Hungary* (Chaillot Paper 23. Paris: Institute for Security Studies Western European Union, February 1996) 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Hans Born, *ibid.* 7.

<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting that the postmodern feature of the state, especially in the European Union, improves the international and transnational organizations’ role in controlling the national armed forces. However this control has been indirect so far.

two reasons. The first is the primary role of the state in controlling the military. Second, because democracy is a form of governance, which assumes the existence of a state, establishing the Soviet successor states and restructuring state organizations was the most important goal.<sup>14</sup> The primary role of the state has been decisive in democratic control over the military because of the need to create democratic decision making processes, requiring firm subordination of the military to the elected civilian authorities, and the de-politicization of the military in post-communist countries, or the de-militarization of the political subsystem in “praetorian” countries.

The efforts of domestic and foreign expert advisors concerning this state-centric approach to democratic control resulted in a relatively low-cost and quick success in democratization. It was true in Hungary, just as in many Central and Eastern European countries, where politicians have had to justify the democratization to NATO and to the European Union. The legal and institutional background of controlling the military was created relatively quickly and the real deficiencies have not been obvious. NATO has encouraged this approach and was satisfied with the young democracies because almost every document stated the requirement of democratic control over the military, even though the clear interpretation had not been expressed.<sup>15</sup>

However, as far as the post-communist armed forces are concerned, there was another, secondary aspect of the efforts, namely democratic education and the socialization of the professional militaries. There were many decisions concerning this, but it essentially remained a question of time. The smooth transition did not result in a huge reduction among the officers and NCOs in spite of the enormous downsizing of the military. Basically, the same military bureaucracy that existed earlier organized the reduction, but in the most developed countries, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the decline of the market economy helped to “solve” the problem by offering more attractive careers than the military. Notwithstanding, the institutions of military education made serious efforts to integrate democracy-related subjects into the agenda. Furthermore, NATO, the United States, Canada, and European countries, first of all

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<sup>14</sup> J. J. Linz and A. Stepan: 7.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel N. Nelson, *Civil Armies, Civil Societies, and NATO's Enlargement* (Armed Forces and Society, Fall 1998 Vol. 25. No. 1.) 145.



Germany and Great Britain, offered education and training programs, which improved the effectiveness of the democratization of the officer corps.

The horizontal aspect of democratic control of the military received much less attention from domestic and foreign experts. However, drawing attention to the horizontal aspect of democratic control is important for many reasons, but fundamentally because of the crucial role of civil society and NGOs in democratic consolidation.

## **B. THE HORIZONTAL ASPECT OF THE DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF MILITARY - CIVIL SOCIETY AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

A. Stepan and J. J. Linz emphasize the vital role of civil society in democratic consolidation. They state that if a functioning state exists, other interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions must also exist or be crafted for a democracy to be consolidated, and they state that the *free and lively civil society* is the first condition.<sup>16</sup> The civil society was defined as an arena of the polity:

...where self-organizing groups, movements, and intellectuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests.<sup>17</sup>

Although there are many definitions of civil society<sup>18</sup> and debates about this field,<sup>19</sup> it seems reasonable to use the definition of Linz and Stepan. Referring to the Hungarian post-communist context, however, Patricia Chilton's definition draws attention to an important feature of civil society. She pointed out that in a totalitarian, and in the case of Hungary an authoritarian context, civil society defines itself in opposition to the state. For this reason, Eastern European literature often makes a sharp distinction between state and non-state (civil society). As she argues:

In the broader context, state/civil society distinctions are not so sharp, but the concept still holds. Civil society exists through self-organized activity,

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<sup>16</sup> J. J. Linz and A. Stepan: 7.

<sup>17</sup> J. J. Linz and A. Stepan: 7.

<sup>18</sup> A. Arato: 314. Larry Dimond, *Developing Democracy Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) 218-260. A. Körösenyi: 162-163. Krishan Kumar, *Civil Társadalom (Civil Society)* in: *Mozgó Világ* 1992. 7. (Hungarian leading periodical on social sciences).

<sup>19</sup> Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992) 1-26.

not dependent upon the agency of the state for its initiation and day-to-day management, but on the free associations of individuals.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the definition of Linz and Stepan coincides with the mainstream theories and helps to distinguish the actors of the political society, such as political parties, from the subgroups of civil society and the NGOs. Before tentatively classifying the organizations in terms of horizontal control, it is worth paying attention to the various civil activities that have roles in promoting the consolidation of the democratic civil-military relations.

L. Diamond definitively pointed out how civil society promotes democratic development and consolidation.<sup>21</sup> He described thirteen ways directly or indirectly linked to civil-military relations or even to the control of the armed forces. Focusing on democratic control, it is worth mentioning the following:

- The basic function of civil society is *to control the state*, the democratic political institutions. More exactly:

After the transition, this [civil society] involves checking, monitoring, and restraining the exercise of power by formally democratic states and holding them accountable to the law and public expectations of responsible government.<sup>22</sup>

- Here, he argues that civil society has “checking and limiting” functions, which are particularly important when corruption is flourishing as it generally does, and states abuse their power. It is important to emphasize here that defense procurement and downsizing of the armed forces are some of the most sensitive areas. It is especially true after the Cold War as the radical shrinking and restructuring of the military is a reality.
- Certain national and international civil organizations, independently or in cooperation with state-financed schools, have direct educational functions. Reforming curricula and writing standards for teachers, and creating new instructional materials concerning democratic values and behaviors, clearly shows that civil society roles go beyond merely checking, criticizing and resisting the state. For example, in Hungary, the Association of History Teachers organized a lecture series about security affairs and democratic civil-military relations.

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<sup>20</sup> Patricia Chilton, “Mechanics of Change: Social Movements, Transnational Coalitions, and the Transformation Process in Eastern Europe” (in: Thomas Risse-Kappen, ed. *Bringing Transnational Relations Back in* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 195.

<sup>21</sup> L. Diamond: 239-250.

<sup>22</sup> L. Diamond: 239.

- The activity of civil society affects the “transition from clientism to citizenship”<sup>23</sup> at the local level. The local activity concerning military training or the appearance of the military in towns was absolutely limited under totalitarian or authoritarian regimes. However, military activity in peacetime directly affected, and still affects, certain regions and towns in countries. Democracy gave citizens the right to express their local interests and it is embodied as a certain local control over military activity, which at least forces the military to follow the regulations in order to accept responsibility for the probable unintended results of their activity, such as polluting the environment.
- Pluralistic civil society generates a wide range of interests that may cut across the principal polarities of political conflict. In this instance, Diamond refers to *the issue-oriented movements*, which “draw together new constituencies that cut across long standing regional, religious, ethnic or partisan cleavages.”<sup>24</sup> Important civil groups can be mentioned which were suppressed under the non-democratic regimes, and became legal during the democratization process. However, most of them, such as pacifist and anti-conscription movements, are rarely welcomed by defense authorities. They monitor the activity of the military and some parts of the defense-related decision making process, which are important according to their concerns (disarmament, enforcing human rights, reforming conscription etc.).
- Civil society widely disseminates information and so empowers citizens in the collective pursuit and defense of their interests and values. This civil activity, according to Diamond, is particularly true in debates over military and national security policies because of the lack of public knowledge in this field.

Besides civil society, some of the NGOs also have relations with the military and have roles in the democratic control over the armed forces. In this respect, different NGO activities can be mentioned which are more or less connected to civil society activities. Three main types of the NGOs’ activities should be mentioned here. *Humanitarian activity* which is typical during the new military missions, such as peacekeeping missions, *interest representation* inside the military, and defense-related academic *research activities* outside the defense establishment. Last, but not least, *media activities* have an enormous role concerning defense-related decision making, peacetime military training, and wartime or peace support activities. Although it is very significant, it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

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<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Fox’s expression cited by L. Diamond: 244.

<sup>24</sup> L. Diamond: 245.

The horizontal aspect of the democratic control of the armed forces can be summarized as referring to those organizations which are relatively independent from the political parties and the executive power, and fully or partly concentrate on defense matters. They have some level of competence and have opinions concerning defense and military-related issues, and their opinions and/or values are expressed in various ways.

Most of these organizations, such as the independent think tanks, simply did not exist under the authoritarian system in Hungary. Others, such as the significant part of the media under communism, had not dealt with military-related issues. And some of them were illegal movements such as the movements against compulsory military service.

A different classification can be stated concerning the organizations, which have roles in the horizontal control over the military. In accordance with their activities and the strength of the relation with the state, a tentative classification seems to be necessary for better understanding civil-military relations, and for further research. These are: international non-governmental organizations, trade unions (military and civil in the military), research and education centers, defense-related cultural organizations, and protest groups.

The first group is the *international “big” NGOs* (Red Cross, Amnesty International) whose role is to *monitor* how the armed forces maintain *human rights and individual freedoms*. These organizations have rather important roles in *non-democratic or poorly consolidated systems or during military operations*. These organizations basically do not depend on the state as they are strongly embedded in the international system and are financially *independent*.

The second group is the *trade unions and “union-like” organizations* in the military. These organizations are employees’ interest groups focusing on working and living conditions, but also “internal” control groups *monitoring* how the military organization maintains *the rule of law*. The latter is particularly important in new democracies where leaders have not had much experience with democracies and easily break the law; whether intentionally or unintentionally is not important. Whenever there is a conscription system, the abuse of power is an everyday aspect in the life of conscripts. These are self-organized organizations, but *strongly depend* on the state which

regulates the rights of the military and civilian employees in the military and national traditions.

The next group is the *universities, think tanks, independent research and educator institutes*. These actors embody the intellectual basis of democratic control outside the state. In these organizations, intellectuals can *monitor, interpret and evaluate* what happens in the field of civil-military relations. They have a certain knack for understanding and evaluating the various legal, economic, political, organizational and social aspects of questions, and problems or tensions in civil-military conflicts and in defense-related decision-making processes. These organizations *partly depend on the state* and provide experts to the political society. Furthermore, these organizations can be characterized as being in a constant state of flux, which means that there is mobility between both civil society and political society and vice versa.

The *defense-related cultural organizations*, which are more or less state initiated, but definitely non-state actor organizations in this field, constitute another group. These organizations have important roles in maintaining dynamic connections between the military or generally defense-related issues and society. They help to preserve defense traditions, either nationally or locally, and they *seek information* about the military. In this way, they *disseminate information* about the military and at the same time *encourage citizens to deal with defense issues*. The role of these organizations is particularly important when all-voluntary forces exist and when the presence of the military is very limited due to permanent downsizing. In some of the post-communist countries, such as the Czech Republic and Hungary, the society is alienated from military-related defense issues due to the permanent historical failures of the military, to the communist experience, and to the relative peaceful feature of the post-Cold War era.

Finally, the *protest movements and organizations* play a significant role in controlling the military. These organizations generally oppose increasing defense budgets, certain weapon systems or arms, and compulsory military service. Consequently, these are *self-organized organizations*, and are independent of the state. They pursue all information about the military and other defense issues and have certain considerations about them. They also *disseminate information* about defense/military

issues and make the public aware of military activities and defense-related decisions. They are continuously *monitoring* how the military and politicians maintain the rule of law during their activities and *encourage citizens* to deal with defense-related issues.

### **C. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HORIZONTAL ASPECT**

The security sector, and thus the controlling security-related organizations, are primarily states' prerogatives.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, an active defense-related civil society and set of NGOs can improve the quality of the democratic CMR. Consequently, the marginalization of this aspect of the CMR is unjustified.

There are at least two main reasons that need to be emphasized in order to increase awareness about this aspect of democratic control over the military. The first relates to democratic values and democratic consolidation in new democracies. The second refers to the new trends in civil-military relations in the post-Cold War era.

#### **1. Democratic Values and Democratic Consolidation in New Democracies**

When discussing the first reason, it can be stated that civil society played a significant role during the democratic transition process and particularly in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Hungary had a rich, and even partly legal, associative life in the 1980s. The vast majority of this activity related to political, legal, and economic discussions and negotiations, but a portion touched upon military issues, such as alternative military service or military service objection. Later, during the negotiations concerning democratic transition between the democratic opposition and the Hungarian Socialist and Workers Party, the opposition, essentially the representatives of the illegal/semi-legal civil society, expressed concerns about the military.

Nevertheless, at the beginning of the democratic transition, the largest part of this civil society converted to the political society. According to P. Schmitter, during the consolidation, the civil society's energies and issues were largely co-opted by the newly established parties, class associations and specialized public agencies.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, the civil society has become weaker, but at the same time, it became legal.

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<sup>25</sup> Marina Caparini: Concept of a Working Group on Civil Society (manuscript) (Geneva: DECAF, 2001) 5.

<sup>26</sup> Philippe C. Schmitter, *The Consolidation of Political Democracies: Processes, Rhythms, Sequences and Types* (in: Geoffrey Pridham ed. *Transition to Democracy* Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1995) 553.

To be more exact, as Attila Ágh pointed out, civil society has developed quickly in East Central Europe during the transition. However, the normative meaning of civil society (which presumes a strong middle-class being able to be significantly independent from the state redistribution) must be separated from its analytical function. In the normative sense, as exemplified by the developed Western societies, civil society does not exist in East Central Europe, but in the analytical sense, it does.<sup>27</sup>

Although the early 1990's can be described as a boom for civil organizations in Hungary, civil society had not been much concerned with the military. As a result, after the transition period, the part of civil-society that has focused on the military or even defense issues, has been very weak.

In Hungary, just as in other post-communist countries, the older historical and later communist associations and societies that cared about defense traditions disappeared. This fact is, together with the lack of a direct external military threat and post-modern socio-cultural changes such as individualization and identity-related changes,<sup>28</sup> crucial when discussing the weak public support for and interest in defense issues.

Civilian intellectuals rarely deal with defense issues at universities and non-governmental research institutes in Hungary. However, civil society, and especially this part of civil society, can be the primary source of civilian experts. It is a vital problem because all of these countries lack civilian experts at ministries of defense and in the legislatures. Another problem is that the few newly established institutes rarely fulfil this function. As W. Jacoby pointed out, Central and Eastern European elites have often imitated public institutional structures that presume the existence of these non-state actors, which private Western foundations, Western states and international organizations are scrambling to promote.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans*, (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 1998) 21.

<sup>28</sup> Stefan Sarvas gives a good summary of these and their affects on the relationship between the state/the military and the public. Stefan Sarvas, *Public Perceptions of Security and the Military in the Czech Republic* (<http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/sarvas.pdf>) 12.

<sup>29</sup> Wade Jacoby, *Tutors and Pupils: International Organizations, Central European Elites, and Western Models* (in: *Governance: An international Journal of Policy and Administration*, Vol. 14, No. 2, April 2001) 176.

Although most of the publications celebrate the success of the rapid democratization of civil-military relations in many post-communist countries, deficiencies are quite obvious. Not every military-related problem particularly affects Hungary, but as D. N. Nelson emphasized in 1998, criminality, procurement corruption, minimal civilian presence or control, disaffection from the public and low compliance by top military leaders to civilian authority affected all aspirants for NATO membership.<sup>30</sup> These phenomena definitely call for greater transparency and control in which the non-state actors should have a crucial role.

## **2. New Trends in Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Cold War Era**

The second reason for attention to horizontal control that needs to be discussed is new trends in civil-military relations in the post-Cold War era. In the post-Cold War era, new security threats have risen and the so-called traditional threats, which ultimately offered reasons for maintaining mass armed forces, disappeared. The new threats, mainly subregional, subnational conflicts, called for new types of military missions, and thus the reorganization of the military. As a result, one of the consequences is that the “military participation ratio”<sup>31</sup> in the societies rapidly declined. The armed forces have become smaller and more professional. Furthermore, the more developed new democracies demonstrate features similar to those of advanced capitalist societies, which are evolving in the direction of “post-military societies.” Therefore, the structural balance between welfare and warfare in society has shifted towards the former.<sup>32</sup> As a result, public attitudes towards defense issues, and especially towards the military, are rather skeptical or apathetic.<sup>33</sup>

Although, the convergence between the civil and military sectors is also identifiable, such as the role of the media, officers’ civilian education, etc., the defense-related decision-making process became more exclusive. This exclusiveness can be

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<sup>30</sup> D. N. Nelson: 153.

<sup>31</sup> Stanislav Andreski, *Military Organization and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) 33.

<sup>32</sup> Martin Shaw’s idea is cited by David Held and Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) 137.

<sup>33</sup> Charles C. Moskos and James Burk, *The Postmodern Military* in: James Burk ed., *The Adaptive Military* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publisher, 1998) 169.



reinforced by the mutual civil-military cooperation in the ministries because of the competition for state-owned and international (NATO, EU) resources.

All the aforementioned issues call for a broader understanding of civil-military relations, and emphasize the significance of the horizontal elements which can improve the democratic nature of this relationship. It also calls for examining the non-governmental, horizontal aspect of democratic control over the military. At the same time, these necessarily draw attention to those conditions in Hungary, and probably in other new democracies, where civil society already has rights, but is lacking the capability to improve the control over and the transparency of the military and the entire defense sector.

### **III. PRECONDITIONS AND DOMESTIC STEPS TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

This chapter describes the transition period of the horizontal aspect of civil-military relations from the late state-party to the democratic system in Hungary. It gives a general overview of the demobilized political life of late communism that focuses on the main feature of the civil-military relations and the role of the civil society in it. This chapter argues that the military-related civil society activity was limited and a significant gap became obvious between the society and the military at the beginning of democratization. It also emphasizes, however, that protest organizations continued their activity as a legal part of the Hungarian social-political life and new horizontal actors appeared geared towards the military, such as cultural and research/advisor organizations. All of these non-governmental organizations influenced in some degree the democratization of civil-military relations by articulating certain groups' values and opinions and by offering intellectual capabilities about military issues.

#### **A. STATE-PARTY SYSTEM AND MILITARY-RELATED CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE LATE 1980S**

Hungarian civil society, as typical of the Soviet bloc phenomenon, was illegal and inherently against the communist system. Intellectuals organized their activities and worked out scenarios for transforming the system into a democratic or at least a somewhat democratic system that kept a very significant distance from Moscow in the 1980s. At the same time, military-related civil activities were merely anti-militarist and against compulsory military service.

Since their activity was contrary to the existing law and connected to human rights, their well-known activists were jailed from time to time just as were other members active in civil society. Perhaps for this reason, the anti-military activists maintained good relationships with churches and the illegal liberal opposition.<sup>34</sup> Although reform of the compulsory military service started in the second half of the 1980s mainly as one of the consequences of the Gorbachev-era, civil society had raised

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<sup>34</sup> Military service objectors were partly religious objectors such as Jehovah witnesses, Nazarenes, Reform-Adventists, the "Bokor" catholic community or political objectors. All of them received a 10-36 month sentence before 1989. In: Tamás Csapodi, "A polgári szolgálat története" (The Story of Civilian Service) Új Generáció, November 20. 2001.

the necessity and strongly supported these reforms. Civil society disseminated information concerning military service-related tensions at the domestic and international level. The tools used were mainly the illegal networks and *samisdat* papers such as “Bokor”, “Demokratikus Ellenzék” (Democratic Opposition), “Karácsonyi Ajándék” (Christmas Present), “Égtájak” (Cardinal Points), and Beszélő. Additionally, there was a mass demonstration dedicated to freeing military service objectors next to the Parliament building in 1988. As a result of this influence, the Hungarian media started to deal with the “Zsolt Keszthelyi issue”, named for one of the political objectors who was imprisoned, and Amnesty International also drew international attention to it by giving “The Political Prisoner of Month” title to Keszthelyi in April 1988.<sup>35</sup>

Anti-military activities reached their most significant goal in 1989 as a result of the aforementioned activities. After a longstanding, and mainly non-public debate,<sup>36</sup> the military officials, obviously with the agreement of the Hungarian Socialist and Workers Party, were willing to work out the system of alternative military service. The final decision in 1989 made it possible for male citizens to choose civilian service instead of armed military service. Although this result was remarkable, civil activities in this field still exist in Hungary, with a modified agenda aiming at all voluntary military service.

No other civil activity with relations to the military occurred in the 1980s. State-party institutions completely covered and controlled all other potential areas of civil society activity. Monitoring military life or participating in decision-making processes was out of the question. The Communist Party and the Political Department of the Hungarian Peoples Army strictly organized the social-military connections in every sense in accordance with specific Party decisions.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Tamás Csapodi, *Katonai szolgálatmegtagadás itthon és külföldön, különös tekintettel a kelet-európai régióra*, PhD dissertation, (Budapest, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> The debate became legitimate after the bill of rights of association (1989.II. tv.). Then the newly established political parties, developed from earlier illegal/semi-legal civil networks and organizations, articulated their opinion about it. For example, on 4 May 1989, Miklos Szabó, the leader of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) openly called for diminishing compulsory military service. *Honvéd Eseménynaptár 1989* (Budapest: Honvédelmi Minisztérium, 1990) 8; Later, the main Hungarian papers intensively dealt with the problems of military service that had been unprecedented. (*Magyar Hírlap*, 30 June 1989; *Magyar Nemzet*, 8 August 1989).

<sup>37</sup> The relating Party decision, approved in March 1967, was in effect until 1989.

The state established and organized “National Peace-Committee” (Országos Béketanács) neutralized the potential public though not illegal anti-militarist or peace activities and movements. The “National Home Defense Association” (Magyar Honvédelmi Szövetség), subordinated to the MOD, organized defense-related activities among youth such as vehicle driving training, practicing shooting, parachuting and diving. The Party and the Political Department actively managed the military-related social and cultural life on the national and local level as well. The military was deeply involved in these activities, and military leaders and Party activists had to report the results and problems regularly to a certain level of the Party bureaucracy. The desired goals of these activities were to strengthen the relationship between the Party, the military and society. Parts of the Hungarian national-defense traditions were able to exist only in this institutional framework and naturally in a restricted way before 1989.

The transformation of the system became obvious in 1989 as a result of the democratization process that began in the late 1980s when the reform communists and the “semi-illegal” liberal opposition, as representatives of civil society, negotiated the method of transition. During these negotiations, the two sides worked out the basic institutions and rules of the transition process in Hungary. Hungary was building a democratic political system, and democratic control of the armed organizations, including the military, the police and the border guards, embodied an integral part of this effort. At this point, the conversion of civil society, which existed mainly to oppose the communist system, had started and formulated the new political society in Hungary.<sup>38</sup>

These circumstances have defined the long-standing conceptual disputes about civil society in Hungary, in which civil society has been understood to be a more lively linkage between the state and society rather than merely the opposition or a tool of the current ruling parties. Beyond these disputes, new political parties have been reluctant to accept that they have not already embodied civil society. The current ruling parties continuously make efforts to keep the emerging civil society under their guidance and enjoy the fact that the private sector is too weak to finance such social self-organization.

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<sup>38</sup> The key issue was that the Parliament, as a necessary condition for the first free elections, passed the bill on rights of association (1989. II. tv.). It created a legal background for establishing political parties as well as social organizations. (<http://www.civil.info.hu/>).

At the same time, the new features of civil society started to take shape in the early 1990s. As far as military-related civil society is concerned, new forms of activities and organizations soon started to form. However, most of these have not been able to exist without state support and a significant portion of the civil society activities have not been “grassroots” in nature.

## **B. THE FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY**

The decision to pursue democratic civil-military relations instead of the communist style of state-party-military and society-military relations was strictly a domestic issue in Hungary. However, this decision was made in the international context of the end of the Cold War. Fearful that the communists would hinder the democratic transition by using force, the “semi-illegal” liberal opposition started to press the communist party and its government to secure democratic changes. The ruling communists were cooperative to some degree.<sup>39</sup> However, in an attempt to preserve communist supervision over the Armed Forces, the communists separated the Ministry of Defense and the Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces (General Staff) in December 1989.<sup>40</sup> This separation proved to be one of the most difficult obstacles to developing civilian control over the military.

The Ministry of Defense was subordinated to the prime minister and the command of the armed forces was subordinated to the president. The institution of the president was created at that time in Hungary. The role of the commander in chief of the armed forces was given to the newly created position of president. According to a widely shared opinion, the reform communist, Imre Pozsgai, had the best chance of being elected president. However, in the 1990 presidential election, Pozsgai was not elected. Neither the president nor the government was under communist influence in 1990. Nevertheless, the actual command of the armed forces remained purely in military hands under the Commander of the Home Defense Forces without any effective institutional contact with the Ministry of Defense. Although this last communist decision concerning the system of

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<sup>39</sup> The Hungarian communist party (MSZMP) withdrew the party from the military and canceled the communist prerogatives in the promotion system. Earlier, the MSZMP was deeply involved in and controlled the military decision making process at every level of the military organization.

<sup>40</sup> Jeffrey Simon, *Central European Civil-Military Relations and NATO Expansion* (Washington: National Defense University, McNair Papers 39, 1995) 86.

military subordination was permanently modified, with the goal of guaranteeing the basic requirements of democratic civilian control, it resulted in a longstanding civil-military and political debate in Hungary. The integration of the two entities became an issue in the mid-1990s,<sup>41</sup> and was finally resolved by the integration of the two entities in the fall of 2001.<sup>42</sup>

The modified constitution in 1989, followed by the new Defense Act (1990/XXI.)<sup>43</sup> and free elections in 1990, guaranteed the basic elements of civilian control over the Hungarian armed forces. Later, several amendments, modifications, and more importantly, military reform in 1992 and the new Defense Act (1993/CX)<sup>44</sup> resulted in democratic and effective<sup>45</sup> control over the Hungarian military and gave more rights to the government and consequently, to the Ministry of Defense. Various, mainly procedural, problems had arisen and had been solved by the governments up to the mid-1990s but significant deficiencies had also remained. The decade-long goal concerning civil-military relations had been partly achieved.

Although democratic control has formally existed since the early 1990s in Hungary, the consolidation of democratic control of the armed forces involved improving the quality of the existing methods of control.

During the early 1990s, in parallel with the formulation of the new legal and state structures of democratic civil-military relations, the illegal forms of civil activity became legalized and new forms also appeared. The legalized activities included the protest, both anti-military and anti-conscription, movements, and the new activities seemed to cover all the other options with different levels of intensity and success.

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<sup>41</sup> British experts carried out research on civilian control over the military in 1996 and they told the Hungarian MOD that the integration of the GS and the MOD was necessary. The MOD started to work on integration that year.

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.honvedelem.hu/Miniszterium\\_index.php](http://www.honvedelem.hu/Miniszterium_index.php).

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9000021.htm/mun\\_2.htm#kagy1](http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9000021.htm/mun_2.htm#kagy1).

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t9300110.htm/t9300110.htm>.

<sup>45</sup> Before reform in 1992, the executive power could exert authority over the armed forces only in a slow and complicated way. It resulted in significant problems concerning national defense during the civil war in Yugoslavia. However, the significant power of the president secured the peaceful resolution of tensions between the society and the government during the transportation blockade (transporters blocked all the main roads protesting against that the government introduced high gas prices without negotiations in October 1990) when changes to the system began because the president was able to reject the use of force.

## **1. Protest Movements**

Two protest movements/organizations have been well known in Hungary in this area: the ALBA Circle (Nonviolence Movement for Peace), and HEL (Liege Against Conscription). One other, known mainly only in particular communities such as protest activists, was the Bokor Catholic Basis-community.

They are quite different in their values and policies. The Bokor community is a religious-based community against any kind of violence, but it has not had very much effect on civil-military relations. However, it disseminates anti-violence information and popularizes anti-military activities in religious communities. The ALBA Circle is a pacifist organization which regularly articulates anti-military and anti-conscription opinions. It has participated in global networks and has paid attention to Hungarian aspects of global peace actions. HEL is formally not an organization but a civil movement against compulsory military service. HEL appears often in the media because of the lively debates on conscription. These classic organizations have remarkable Internet activities.<sup>46</sup> The ALBA Circle and HEL have been “watchdogs” of military activities.

These protest movements could act publicly in accordance with their values. They could negotiate and/or discuss small arms, military service and human rights issues with officials. They could legally demonstrate<sup>47</sup> and express their opinions in the media. The protest organizations appeared in the media and collected the signature of citizens against the liberalization of the possession of arms and compulsory military service in 1991. In the same year, the protest organizations established the “Anti-Violence Forum” and they demonstrated for peace because of the civil war in Yugoslavia.<sup>48</sup>

The protest organizations had reasonable hopes to attain some of their goals because of severe downsizing in the military and the improving democracy, but the

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<sup>46</sup> See: [www.albakor.hu](http://www.albakor.hu), [www.bokor.hu](http://www.bokor.hu), and <http://www.c3.hu/~farkashe/hel/index.html>.

<sup>47</sup> An anarchist group demonstrated in front of the MOD on 14 November 1990. Honvéd Eseménynaptár 1990 (Budapest: Honvédelmi Minisztérium, 1990) 87.

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.c3.hu/%7Efarkashe/eef/index.html>.

rapidly declining defense budget<sup>49</sup> made an all-voluntary force an impossible option. Nevertheless, the fortunate timing of organizational and demographic changes helped to modify the conscription system by making it more tolerant. The military was shrinking<sup>50</sup> while the number of young males was increasing greatly<sup>51</sup> in the first half of the 1990s. It created a situation in which the length and the conditions of the alternative military service were negotiable.

Additionally, the democracy that was consolidating increasingly cared about human rights and, at a minimum, the human rights-related military issues were widely discussed<sup>52</sup> and the military was more and more concerned about the treatment of conscripts. Nevertheless, the unclear international order and security circumstances, the weak budget, as well as deep existing emotions about the freely elected conservative government concerning the creation of a new national military with conscription did not support their efforts. The “the military is the school of nation” idea has once again emerged. To sum up, in this period, the protest movements became a legal part of the civil-military relations and fulfilled their roles in controlling the military, disseminating military-related information, and encouraging the citizens to participate in military and/or defense discussions even in small circles.<sup>53</sup>

## **2. National Defense Culture-Related Organizations**

The national defense culture-related organizations appeared quite soon as a result of the activities of those demobilized and retired soldiers who had served in the

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<sup>49</sup> The real value of the defense budget fell to 54% (1992) and then to 49% (1994) compared with the value in 1988. *Haderő-átalakítás (The Transforming Military) 1995-1998-2008*. (Budapest, Ministry of Defense, 1998).

<sup>50</sup> 155 thousand soldiers served in the Hungarian military in 1989. It shrank to 100 thousand in four years. Mihály Bak, “A honvédség útja a leépülés felé” *Világgazdaság*, Melléklet 2000 nyár <http://www.vilaggazdasag.hu/mellekl/egyeb/rendszervalto/cikk07.sht>.

<sup>51</sup> A minister, whose last name was Ratko, forbade abortion for a few years during the 1950's. It caused a very significant second demographic wave at the very end of the 1980's and early 1990's which has popularly been referred to as “Ratko's grandchildren”.

<sup>52</sup> The Military Court convicted two officers of abusing power against conscripts in Szeged (a city in southern Hungary), in August 1991. *Honvéd Eseménynaptár 1991* (Budapest: Honvédelmi Minisztérium, 1993) 130.

<sup>53</sup> Although protest organizations encompass only a few hundred activists, officials have had to care about them. These organizations are deeply embedded in international advocacy networks. It can be proved that the international meeting of military service objectors was held in Budapest in 1991, a year after the first free elections. László Csendes, “Hadsereg-történet 1945-1998” (*Új Honvédségi Szemle*, Különkiadás, 1998) 142.



communist regime. They pursued their legal and ethical rehabilitation<sup>54</sup> as well as the revitalization of the almost forgotten traditions since most of these people had endured serious insults and grievances during the communist regime. The rehabilitation of former soldiers, pre-communist organizations, and the establishment of new organizations occurred at the same time.

The legal formulation of these rather small organizations, just as all the other civil organizations, began in 1992 when the relevant governmental decree became effective.<sup>55</sup> Since 1992, thousands of civil organizations have been established but just a few that focus on national defense issues. Actually, many more challenging fields existed at that time than national defense around which mobilized people to create organizations. The main issue was the representation of interests as a result of restructuring the economy. However, the downsizing of the military and the reorganization of social connections of the military generated new forms of activities in social-military relations as the foundations of the system became effective in 2000.

In addition to the rehabilitated soldiers' organizations as self-organized organizations appeared. The first two were established in the two cities of Jánoshalma and Jászberény for saving the integrity of the former retired and recently demobilized military communities and also their integration into local society. They started to practice an unprecedented two-way communication with the local society and with the military and pursued their interests, such as having meetings for people and their families who had served in the military, providing cultural programs, and disseminating defense-related traditions and information locally. Although they pioneered new forms of activities based on self-organization, the vast majority of the activities of these organizations involved just trying to stay afloat and only a few hundred people were involved.

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<sup>54</sup> Történelmi Igazságtétel Bizottság Katonai Szekcioja (Committee for Historical Justice Military Section) was probably the most effective organization in this field. It represented about 20,000 former professional military men and policemen who were discriminated against after the 1956 revolution. The Committee has requested permanent full rehabilitation with governments.

<sup>55</sup> 114/1992. (VII. 23.) Decree of Government. This decree, in accordance with the bill (1989 II.), defined the framework of nonprofit organizations.

In spite of the emergence of these new activities the external social integration and the internal cohesion of the military declined remarkably in the early 1990s due to the transformation of the social and economic system. The communist as well as the prewar system became weak and/or remained ungrounded. The new endeavors were feeble and lacked support from both the state and citizens. The tremendous economical difficulties caused by restructuring the economy created a situation that was not advantageous for developing rather value-oriented social-military relations.

### **3. Think-Tank-Like Activity**

Efforts to develop “think-tank-like” activity reflected the serious deficiency in the expertise of civilians in the emerging democratic civil-military relations. It was a necessity borne out of the basic requirement of the democratic system, namely the civilian supremacy. It fundamentally means that democratically elected civilians decide on the “immediate operating issues”<sup>56</sup> of the military organization. It also has had to appear in the MOD, where government appointees are presumed to have certain military-related expertise. Nevertheless, the difficulty encountered in Hungary was the absolute lack of such expertise. In the initial stages of transition, there were no civilians who understood the structure of the military, military working mechanisms, or equipment and training-related questions. In accordance with the Soviet model, previously military people had exclusively filled positions in the MOD during the communist regime; and only military people dealt with military issues. Anton A. Bebler candidly characterized the results of the early “civilianization” of the young democracies:

Due to the peculiarities of ‘transition’ and to the shallowness of democratization in the region the advent of civilian defense ministers was followed also by packing up the top layer of defense ministries with insufficiently qualified personnel. Even outright incompetent, civilian political activists, belonging or being close to the defense minister’s party or to the circle of his personnel associates and cronies found employment in the ministry.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> These are the quantitative (size, recruitment, etc.), the qualitative (composition, equipment, etc.) and the dynamic (utilization) issues of the military. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985) 1.

<sup>57</sup> Anton A. Bebler, ed., *Civil-Military Relations in Post Communist States, Central and Eastern Europe in Transition* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997) 75.

The obvious weakness of the “vertical” aspect of democratic control over the military called for expertise to be imported. Sources could be independent research institutes, or academic centers dealing with military-related issues or in other words, non-governmental organizations accumulating particular knowledge in this field. These options did not exist at that time due to the lack of such organizations. Nevertheless, it was naturally offered by the military itself, but at that time, the first attempt to be an independent expert emerged.

Undoubtedly, Péter Deák was the first who recognized the need for such an institution. He, as a skillful retired colonel with contacts in the civilian intellectual society, understood the contemporary defense-related debates, and dilemmas and that the new political elite was not at all informed about defense matters.<sup>58</sup> As a result, he established the first Hungarian “think-tank-like” non-government organization in the field of defense, namely the Center for Security and Defense Studies Foundation (CSDSF).

This organization has been working extensively since 1990. Although the conventional wisdom holds that this foundation has close ties to the Hungarian Socialist Party, all governments and thus the first free elected conservative government, utilized the services of the CSDSF.

The range of the CSDSF’s activities started during the early 1990s, and concluded with mainly being organizational and secondly, analytical. Hence, this organization offered its members knowledge and their contacts within military and academic circles on defense issues. The publications and essays of the CSDSF on contemporary national defense questions prove that this NGO was involved in the associated decision making process. This organization attracted the attention of state officials on important defense-

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<sup>58</sup> Defense-related matters appeared in the new “transitional ” literature (Kapu, Beszélő, etc) approaching the question “What is defense all about after the Warsaw Pact?”, which started him off initially in 1990. (Interview with Péter Deák, Research Director of Center for Security and Defense Studies Foundation, 12 March 2002).

related matters, produced independent professional materials,<sup>59</sup> and offered an organizer role utilizing its networks.<sup>60</sup>

The activities of the CSDSF have not been classic “think-tank” activities since it was rather organizational in nature, rather than employing academics in the field of defense, conducting research and giving advice to clients. At the same time, it was a kind of model for establishing and managing a non-governmental institution in the field of defense which was able to be sensitive to defense-related challenges and to mobilize intellectual capacities for assisting the executive branch, different bodies of the legislature, or even political parties concerning certain topics.

During the early 1990s, the CSDSF was the only Hungarian, non-governmental institution, but other academic activities appeared also under different circumstances. Foreign and state-owned institutions started to work in this field, which proved that there was a need for such activities. Foreign institutions organized conferences, ordered research and published results about the Hungarian national defense field. Foreign non-governmental and national state-owned agencies cooperated in providing information about Hungarian military society and defense institutions.<sup>61</sup> All these phenomena have raised the question as to whether or not there is a need for non-governmental defense-related academic activities.

The answer has been not easy, but several facts were already obvious during the early 1990s. The exclusive reliance of the state on state-owned institutions was a leftover from the past. The state and the public require information from multiple rather than single sources because of the need for reliability. State-governed institutions are usually under bureaucratic pressure to present suitable results and alternative views could be useful. Alternative ways of looking at defense issues require more civil-society activity.

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<sup>59</sup> The CSDSF contributed to formulating the Principles of National Defense, the government’s ideas concerning creating a military and compulsory military service, and helped to interpret the security-related effects of minority questions, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Gulf War during the early 1990s. (CSDSF library documentation).

<sup>60</sup> CSDSF organized conferences: “The Security-Related Aspects of Minorities”(1991), “The Technical Innovation and Defense” (1993) (CSDSF library documentation).

<sup>61</sup> Probably the best example was the German Hanns-Seidel Foundation activity in cooperation with the MOD, the Zrinyi Miklos Military Academy (today: National Defense University) in 1992-93.

In summary, the opposition to the communist system was known as civil society in Hungary and this social configuration largely created the political society during and after the transition. Consequently, the civil society was involved in creating the foundations of democratic civil-military relations. The restructuring of social and political life resulted in a new vibrant political society and a relatively weak civil society during early democratization. However, the number of national non-governmental organizations grew rapidly after a government decree in 1992.

Nevertheless there were not many civil organizations geared towards the military. These organizations have had different profiles and operated under different conditions in the early 1990s due to their types of activity and legacy. Protest organizations could continue their work legally and publicly. They influenced conscription-related debates and continuously monitored the military and defense bureaucracy and socialized it to be under civilian control. The culture-related organizations were very small and had just started to form. There was a vacuum in society-military relations. Neither the communist nor the prewar institutions were able to exist under the current circumstances. Nevertheless, new types of organizations started to emerge. There was only one “think-tank-like” organization, which organized the intellectuals supporting the new legislature and administration rather than conducting any research. Nevertheless, its relative independence from the political sphere helped the new ruling parties to gather alternative information about the military and it also helped to open the closed society of the military.

#### **IV. CONSOLIDATING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND HORIZONTAL ACTORS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 1990S**

In the early 1990s, Hungary succeeded in setting up legal and organizational frameworks for democratic civil-military relations. Beyond the establishment of the rule of law and major institutional changes, which are of primary importance, several key issues regarding civil-military relations remained to be addressed in the mid-1990s. These are related to expertise, procedural routines on both the military and the civilian sides, social integration of the military, and professionalization, including depolitization, of the officer corps.<sup>62</sup> The focus of this chapter will be on the first three issues due to their relevance concerning civil society.

This part of the thesis argues that democratic consolidation of the Hungarian CMR was going on and the horizontal actors had some influence on these issues. Crucial decisions were made defining the rules of the civil-organizations' activity and their relationship with the state. Non-governmental activity concerning military issues became more active and diverse. However, definitive resolutions did not occur in topical military-related issues. The military-, defense-related expertise mainly remained in military personnel's hands, procedural weaknesses, in close relation to the still separated MOD and GS, persisted, and the social integration just slightly developed. Furthermore, the significance of preparing for the NATO enlargement drove most of the CMR-related activities, including horizontal moves, and it encouraged the state to seek to control the life of civil society.

##### **A. SUCCESSES AND FAILURES IN BUILDING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

After the second free parliamentary elections in 1994, the social-liberal (Hungarian Socialist Party-Alliance of Free Democrats) coalition came to power in Hungary. The new government considered the lack of civilian experts at the MOD to be an important problem. However, the parliamentary opposition, and NATO and member

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<sup>62</sup> Tradition and culture can be also mentioned here as important parts of developing civilian expertise and the military vocation in a democratic way. See: Rudolf Joó, *The Democratic Control of the Armed Forces: The Experience of Hungary* (Chaillot Paper 23. Paris: Institute for Security Studies Western European Union, February 1996) 20.

countries as well, strongly and reasonably criticized its answer to this problem.<sup>63</sup> The new political leadership preferred military and/or ex-military personnel, which seemed to be partly an answer for the incompetence during the previous MOD<sup>64</sup> and partially proved the good relationship between the military leadership and the Socialist Party, the successor party of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party. Although the new leadership undoubtedly accepted the democratic rules, the so-called “militarization” of the Ministry, was a fact. The new minister was a retired colonel, György Keleti, and he replaced leading civilian personnel with military or former military generals and officers. (Administrative state secretary Rudolf Joo was replaced by BG Jozsef Feher, and Economy and Budget deputy administrative state secretary Sandor Turjan was replaced by MG Karoly Janza. Military personnel also took over department level positions.<sup>65</sup>)

Besides being strongly criticized about these decisions, the dilemma remained concerning who could run the MOD correctly, either civilians without certain knowledge of the military, or military personnel. However, the new minister stated that he would act as a politician and not as a former career soldier,<sup>66</sup> and as a matter of fact, fiscal pragmatism was the main driving force during the governance of the social-liberal coalition. Nevertheless, the answer, preferring military experts instead of civilians, was controversial. First of all, the democratic requirement concerning civilian political leadership could not be neglected because of a lack of expert civilians. Secondly, scandals in relation to the new minister’s decisions highlighted the weakness of maintaining democratic procedures. (Two scandals shook the MOD in 1996. The first was in March. The Minister of Defense decided to buy 100 T-72 tanks from Belorussia without properly checking with the Defense Committee of the Parliament.<sup>67</sup> The second was in May when Hungarian military airplanes left the country for international exercises

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<sup>63</sup> “Főtisztos polgárok”, *Heti Világgazdaság* (Hungarian weekly) (12. November 1994); British experts criticized the ratio of military personnel in the top layer of Hungarian MOD in: “A honvédség civil ellenőrzése”, *Heti Világgazdaság* (22 February 1997).

<sup>64</sup> MG Károly Janza, who was the chief economist at the MOD, claimed experts are even military personnel instead of amateurs. In: “Válaszol Janza Károly vezérőrnagy a HM főközgazdásza”, *Heti Világgazdaság* (01 October 1994).

<sup>65</sup> Jeffrey Simon, *Central European Civil-Military Relations and NATO Expansion* (Washington: National Defense University, McNair Papers 39, 1995) 100-102.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Gyorgy Keleti, *Nepszabadsag*, 30 June 1994, *FIBIS-EEU-94-127* (1 July 1994) 15.

<sup>67</sup> *Heti Világgazdaság* (06 April, 1996).

without the permission of the Parliament.)<sup>68</sup> Finally the politicization of the military elite has been undesirable.

The proper answer calls for civilian experts, in addition to other issues, such as a clear distinction between military and civilian responsibilities, a culture of cooperation between the Ministry and the General Staff, and standardized bureaucratic procedures. Politics, civil society, and the MOD equally could be a source of expert civilians. However, nothing seemed to encourage the civilianization of defense-related knowledge until the middle 1990s.

Besides the lack of civilian experts and procedural deficiencies, structural problems were the focus of debates on civil-military relations. The bureaucracies of the MOD and the General Staff, which had become separate entities in 1989, grew and produced parallel working functions which sometimes competed with each other.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, the military activities were not transparent to the MOD and especially to the Parliament. This particular problem has been one of the most important difficulties concerning democratic control over the armed forces, but has also been influential in bureaucratic and academic debates. Foreign and domestic NGOs joined the discussion as it has had political, legal, administrative and organizational aspects. Although this issue intensified discussion, the main impetus accelerating civil-military relations was undoubtedly the prospect of NATO enlargement. At the same time, NATO enlargement drew attention to society's low level of interest in defense-related issues. It became obvious in 1997 because the government promised a referendum on joining NATO but polls showed that the level of social interest about NATO was so low that it could endanger the primary political goal of joining the Alliance.<sup>70</sup>

By the end 1997, as a consequence of the NATO launch PfP program in 1994<sup>71</sup> and officially inviting Hungary to join NATO in 1997,<sup>72</sup> NATO enlargement was the

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<sup>68</sup> *Heti Világgazdaság* (22 May, 1996).

<sup>69</sup> The parallel working functions and oversized leading top layer was a fact in spite of the reorganizations and downsizing in 1994-1995. The shrinking at the MOD was a result of the Financial Minister's decision concerning ministries. *Magyar Hírlap* (3 December, 1994) 5.

<sup>70</sup> *The Washington Post* 06 November, 1997.

<sup>71</sup> After the Clinton administration finalized the concept of the Partnership for Peace, the Alliance launched it in January 1994.



main subject of defense-related civil society activity such as protests and popularization activities. NATO itself was not just the subject of these activities but directly and indirectly promoted non-governmental actions. Nevertheless, the mainstream grassroots activity concerning society-military relations stipulated by the rapid downsizing of the military was among the serious financial constraints.<sup>73</sup> The reorganization of the military and almost the entire scope of civil-military relations was affected by the financial difficulties of the country, marked by a high level foreign debt, inflation, with the highest point being 28%, and 12% unemployment which in some regions was more than 20%.<sup>74</sup>

The Hungarian Parliament decided to reduce radically the size of and to restructure the Armed Forces.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, garrisons were closed, and in several cases this occurred in cities which were traditionally garrison-cities. In these places, the military-related civil organizations started to consider the difficulties facing ex-military communities and defense traditions. Although the MOD and the GS cooperated with these new organizations, the realization of the vacuum created in defense-related social interests and the possible role of these former military communities did not occur immediately.

This serious gap remained long after the collapse of the communist type of homeland-defense-culture organizations, but currently severe social problems stimulated civil-military relations due to the necessity of human conversion. The high level of unemployment in connected state projects and the downsizing of the military opened new discussions between the military, the MOD and the civilian sector, including state organizations, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and universities dealing with the labor market.

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<sup>72</sup> NATO member states invited Hungary and the Czech Republic and Poland to accede to NATO on 8 July 1997 at the NATO Summit.

<sup>73</sup> The defense budget declined from 2.8% of the GDP in 1989 to roughly 1.3% in 1997. Jeffrey Simon, *The New NATO Members: Will They Contribute?* (<http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/forum160.html>) NATO member states invited Hungary in 1997 at the NATO Summit Meeting in Madrid. Hungary has increased its defense budget by 0.1% per year since then.

<sup>74</sup> Katalin Bossanyi, "Economic Processes", *The Reliable Book of Facts: Hungary '98* (Budapest: Greger-Delacroix, 1999) 134-142.

<sup>75</sup> 88/1995 (VII. 6.) Parliamentary resolution about the long and midterm reorganization of Hungarian Defense Forces. Accordingly, the size of the military was reduced from 100,000 to 60,000 until the end 1998, [www.kerszov.hu/kzlcim](http://www.kerszov.hu/kzlcim).

Briefly, by the middle of the 1990s, the main consideration was not the establishment of institutions and legal frameworks, but maintaining procedures and reducing the military. Later on, starting in 1996-97, NATO enlargement and the consequences of the downsizing became more important. Furthermore, by the end of 1997, the country was almost over the so-called shock therapy, so, slowly but surely, the available financial sources started to increase. Nevertheless, the process in civil society also shaped the characteristics of Hungarian civil-military relations.

## **B. THE DEVELOPING CIVIL SOCIETY**

The early 1990s could be characterized by legalization, the conversion of civil/political society, and the awaking of the consciousness of the civil society. The middle of the decade was characterized by the extent and wide variety of civil organizations, the majority dominated by politicians, and civil-military relations dominated by military and ex-military personnel.

By the mid 1990s, 19.5% of the Hungarian population were members<sup>76</sup> of approximately 40,000 civil organizations.<sup>77</sup> Although, a remarkable portion of society, it is difficult to estimate the share of the “real” civil society groups due to insufficient sources of data. As a matter of fact, the lax regulations concerning civil organizations and possible access to state financial resources inspired small groups of citizens to found non-governmental organizations.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the number of civil organizations continuously increased during the 1990s and reached as many as 55,774 in 1997.

What is worse is that accessing these financial resources required a good relationship with the political elite because a parliamentary committee decided, with accompanying heated debates and party rivalry, the allocation of financial assets.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, parliamentary subvention of civil organizations was crucial for the survival of these non-profit organizations. Although the parliament adopted a law<sup>80</sup> under which

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<sup>76</sup> “Önszerveződő polgárok” (Self-organized citizens) *Heti Világgazdaság* (28 January 1995).

<sup>77</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, ed., *Nation in Transit, 1998: Civil Society Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and Newly Independent States* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999) 278.

<sup>78</sup> Business and political groups often register as foundations to establish cover for the pursuit of private rather than public gain. *Ibid.* 278.

<sup>79</sup> “Társadalmi szervezetek támogatása” *Heti Világgazdaság* (28 January 1995).

<sup>80</sup> 1996 / CXXVI. Law (<http://www.civil.info.hu/>).

citizens could decide freely to give one percent of the income tax to qualified civil organizations<sup>81</sup>, it did not generate much independent funding.

Local governments had limited sources and the private sector was not strong enough to significantly support such organizations. Nevertheless, some kind of cooperation emerged among these municipal, entrepreneurial and local NGO actors for supporting local interests such as providing services and strengthening cooperation between national decision-makers.

Furthermore the state, as a result of civil society influence, realized the differentiation of civil organizations and that some of them could have been qualified to promote and/or carry out public duties considered important from the state point of view. This led to negotiations and finally resolving and passing the law on nonprofit organizations to create a category for NGOs whose activity promotes the “public interests” in 1997.<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, what remained was the qualification of NGOs, which was a step towards financing worthy activities instead of virtual organizations.

Due to these circumstances, military-related civil society developed and differentiated significantly, and part of it improved its capacity. Although society-state-military relations improved, political parties controlled the vast number of civil organizations, while civil organizations controlled the military-related state bureaucracy.

### **1. Protest Movements: Watchdogs**

Protest movements, the least dependent NGOs relying on subsidies from state institutions, could continue to act legally and had access to the media under the second, social-liberal government. HEL and ALBA Circle activities regularly appeared in the media and had connections to the MOD under the second government.<sup>83</sup> In spite of their relatively small membership, they could communicate their values, and in some degree,

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<sup>81</sup> “Drága egy százalék” *Magyar Hírlap* (19 November 1996) 11.

<sup>82</sup> 1997/CLVI law on public utilized organizations.

<sup>83</sup> Fehér József, State Secretary of the MOD, pointed to the importance of dialogue between the state and civil organizations, even though they had different beliefs, when he met with the representatives of the civil society at the MOD. *Magyar Hírlap* (17 May 1995) 27.

influence civil-military relations based on their well-developed international and domestic networks.<sup>84</sup>

The common topic of these two organizations has been conscription. Between 1994-1998, they publicly expressed several times the need to reduce compulsory military service.<sup>85</sup> They have forced the government to make statements and the parliament to define this goal in related decisions. Although the government, as well as the parliament, had connections with these organizations, the decision was never made to eliminate conscription. However, the social-liberal government stated it as a long-term desired option. Furthermore, the Parliament's decision about mid- and long-term transformation of the military, in 1995, contained the goal of increasing the ratio of volunteer, or contracted soldiers.<sup>86</sup>

The activity of the protesters included active communication towards their main target group, the youth, concerning their legal rights in choosing alternative service. The ALBA Circle also organized a network for protecting civic rights connected to military service. The European Union's PHARE program<sup>87</sup> supported this project to enhance democratic consolidation in Hungary.<sup>88</sup> This protective activity continuously pressed the state to follow the rules and make acceptable decisions.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Hungarian military-related protest activist groups have produced exactly what is highlighted in M. E. Keck and K. Sikkink's work concerning the accountability of politics: "Network activists, however, try to make such statements into opportunities for accountability politics. Once a government has publicly committed itself to a principle -...- networks can use those positions, and their command of information, to expose the distance between discourse and practice." Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) 24.

<sup>85</sup> Exp.: HEL Press Conference, Magyar Hírlap (7 November 1994) 23. ALBA Circle expressed its opinion in the MOD, Magyar Hírlap (17 May 1995) 27.

<sup>86</sup> 88/1995 (VII. 6.) Parliamentary resolution [www.kerszov.hu/kzlcim](http://www.kerszov.hu/kzlcim).

<sup>87</sup> EU PHARE (Pologne et Hongrie: Actions pour la Reconversion Économique) program and SOROS Foundation, founded by George Soros, have been the most valuable, well organized sponsors of Hungarian civil society since the beginning of democratic transition.

<sup>88</sup> *Magyar Hírlap* (14 February 1995) 4.

<sup>89</sup> The ALBA Circle expressed its opinion concerning the use of manpower provided by the institution of alternative military service. Officials considered their opinion. *Magyar Hírlap* (19 March 1997) 5. The ALBA Circle also suggested introducing the institution of military ombudsman as a sufficient opportunity to protect soldier's rights and protecting them against the abuse of power in the military, and "empowering civilian control over the military", but thus far, this has not been the case. *Magyar Hírlap* (10 December 1997)

The activists of the ALBA Circle regularly dealt with global issues also, such as war in Chechnya or the banning of landmines. The latter issue was especially interesting from the CMR point of view because it represented a situation in which a NGO drew attention to preparing an international regime and the necessary domestic answers. In this case, the NGO published the exact number of Hungarian landmines and called for their destruction and for official statements.<sup>90</sup>

Other than the anti-conscription subject, the most well-known protest activity was when the ALBA Circle opposed NATO enlargement and Hungary's NATO membership. Although this activity caused a "headache" for the government, it definitely pushed officials to publish more information, data, and make statements concerning the goals and results of possible NATO membership. For example the ALBA Circle, together with fourteen other civil organizations, required official statements against locating nuclear weapons on Hungarian territory in the case of NATO membership.<sup>91</sup> These kinds of activity, as a part of DCMR, ensured control not just of the military but of the military-related state-bureaucracy and its accountability as well. It also pressed the Parliament and the ministries (MOD, MFA) to take under consideration the articulated different opinions and increasing state-society communication concerning the military.

## **2. Slowly Emerging Defense-Culture Organizations: Troubleshooting**

This aspect of society-military relations was not able to recover after communism during the mid 1990s. National defense-related traditions were rarely considered by grassroots organizations. Particular small groups<sup>92</sup> and local activists considered national defense and military traditions, and organized an increasing variety of events,<sup>93</sup> but nationwide activity was not manifested. Schools did not have defense-culture-related activities, only certain national days were celebrated concerning defense traditions. At the same time, the military itself went through a difficult, under-financed transformation, which caused a decline in public affairs and cultural programs even in the military in the middle of the 1990s.

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<sup>90</sup> *Magyar Hirlap* (9 November 1996) 3. and (18 August 1997) 3.

<sup>91</sup> *Magyar Hirlap* (08 April 1997) 5.

<sup>92</sup> "Vitezi Rend (Order of Valiant Warriors), Foundation for Arpad-house Knights' Military Traditions etc.

<sup>93</sup> Many of the local organization events considered tourism with medieval games.

As previously mentioned, military reorganization and downsizing led to the establishment of defense-cultural associations. Local ex-military communities primarily run these civil organizations as happened in the two cases in Janoshalma and Jaszbereny (p. 29). These organizations in former garrison-cities followed the pattern of the founders and started organizing the ex-military communities and building relationships with local authorities, schools, and cultural facilities as well as looking for MOD and GS connections. Nevertheless, their first steps naturally focused on financial difficulties and organizing basic programs for retired and demobilized military personnel.

Most of the volunteer management of these organizations learned relatively quickly non-profit managing techniques and produced remarkable results.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, these organizations continuously pressed state officials, both in formal and informal ways, to support their activities. Their integrating, coordinating activities undoubtedly were of vital importance to the local and national authorities due to the potential social tensions that could be caused by a relatively large number of unintegrated, disadvantaged, and occasionally unemployed ex-military personnel. Furthermore, the MOD was driven to help them by moral motives. Consequently, these organizations could obtain a barter agreement with the MOD.<sup>95</sup>

As a result of the agreement they could rent MOD-owned property for services. These services mainly contained cultural programs for ex-military communities, but additional elements targeted the local civilian community. Cooperation with local libraries, museums and elementary schools appeared with programs considering military traditions. Nevertheless, this cooperation was a minor part of their activities. The obviously vital problem remained of the integration of the former military community, which was separated earlier from the civilian part of the cities and developed a kind of subculture difficult to penetrate.

The transitory situation between these self-organized communities and the MOD changed essentially in 1997, when the MOD worked out a new policy concerning

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<sup>94</sup> Maj. Ferenc Molnár, "Atmenet, avagy az ex-katona-társadalom 'C' variánsa" (Home-defense-culture organizations in former garrison-cities) *Human Szemle* (Hungarian military periodical) 1999. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Ret. LTC Jozsef Mucsi advisor of the Social and Cultural Affairs Department of the MOD. (11 May, 2002).

military cultural facilities.<sup>96</sup> According to this document, the MOD categorized the cultural organizations and defined a category for these NGOs, namely “C”-type organizations. The MOD decision declared that these nonprofit NGOs, foundations and associations, were the primary elements in cities and regions to care about cultural programs for ex-military personnel, their families, and military traditions in the civilian sector. At the same time, these organizations could expect subsidies if they were successfully applied yearly.

Common steps of the newly emerged national-defense-culture-related NGOs and the MOD were a potential source of building better and stronger society-military relations. However, these NGOs were established in only a handful of places and did not extend to the entire country, and the success of their activities varied.

Deficiencies in social-military relations remained a problem. It seemed that this aspect of CMR would develop very slowly in spite of the NGOs’ activity. Without active state participation, this part of CMR could hardly develop and support social integration of the military. Nevertheless, the ex-military communities’ NGOs and other small, local civil initiatives tended to show a rather colorful picture even though not very successful.

### **3. Think-Tank and Educator Organizations**

The middle of the 1990s brought the formulation of new NGOs dealing with military and security-related questions into, or close to, academic circles. The process of establishing new organizations increased due to the anticipated NATO enlargement. However, active and retired military people dominated these organizations, and civilian experts slowly appeared in small numbers. Furthermore, the established organizations carried out popularization activities concerning a reorganized military and NATO enlargement rather than fulfilling an analyzer and/or advisory role.

The CSDSF remained the leading organization and its activity improved due to mutual cooperation with the current social-liberal government. Consequently, the MOD and MFA ordered several expert analyses and organizer tasks from and via this NGO. At the same time, the activity of the CSDSF improved in other ways because their efforts in building relations with universities and newly emerging NGOs were successful.

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<sup>96</sup> 38/1997 MOD Direction.

Additionally, the CSDSF proved, even in small numbers, and occasionally, that such an institution could be a useful supporter of emerging civilian experts as a work or training place for civilians.<sup>97</sup> However, the dominance of active or former military personnel continued in this organization.

The policy, and probably the opportunities, of the CSDSF remained the same as in the beginning, such as organizing events and coordinating contracted (for single task) academics rather than employing experts. Presumably, financial considerations supported this solution from the organizational side and the reality in Hungary supported it as well. Being more exact, the few Hungarian military defense experts have not wanted to risk being employed by an NGO. National NGOs have been judged fairly as unstable, under-financed institutions and remarkably dependent on the current governing political parties.

Newly emerging non-profit organizations in this field also were established and run by former military people and/or politicians. Two NGOs were established in the middle of the 1990s: the Manfred Wörner Foundation (MWF) and the Military-Science and Security Policy Association (HABE). The latter was established inside the Scientific Information Association (TIT), which was a well-known national NGO. Both seemed to be educator and policy-promoter organizations and not think tanks.

Politicians, from the governing and opposition sides as well, and military leaders established the MWF in 1995 for disseminating information on NATO and democratic control over the armed forces, and for educating civilians on security policies. They also intended to create forums discussing the Euro-Atlantic integration of Hungary.<sup>98</sup>

In the beginning, the MWF primarily organized events to make NATO and the military more popular, which made it well known. These successful activities were presumably consequences of the founder's good political connections and the leading issue of NATO enlargement. Nevertheless, the officially well financed events created a delicate situation when an NGO action was demonstratively opposed by another NGO.

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<sup>97</sup> Some civilian experts were employed for a while and civilian university students spent their training time at CSDSF. Interview with Péter Deák (12 March 2002).

<sup>98</sup> *Magyar Hírlap* (10 May 1996) 2.



This happened when the MWF launched its program, the so-called NATO-train, as a mobile advocate of NATO and Hungarian NATO membership with politicians, experts, industrial representatives, and journalists on board. Three activists of the ALBA Circle tied themselves to trains in protest.<sup>99</sup>

Although the foundation organized a few more successful events sponsored by the state, its activity has slowly but surely moved towards a mainly educator role since 1997.<sup>100</sup> The slow adjustment in the foundation profile changed the organization from a state-policy communicator organization to an educator NGO focusing on security issues. In accordance with this transformation, more experts than politicians appeared in their programs and the budget received decreased funding.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, the situation was similar in the case of the CSDSF, but in this case, the consumers, the targeted audience, were not primarily political and military decision-makers but civilians.

Retired military personnel, mainly from military schools, established the other emerging NGO, the HABE in 1996. They declared their goals to be the preparation of independent security-related analyses and education of youth and teachers for Euro-Atlantic integration, foreign and security policy, as well as armed organization-related topics.<sup>102</sup>

This organization, enjoying the great prestige of TIT, developed its activities quite quickly and well. It has established regular programs and publications. It has a permanent lecture series on current security policy issues, summer university programs on modernization, integration and security issues, and conferences on regional security in different Hungarian regions. In accordance, the educator role of HABE integrated with the public education system to offer security-related special programs.<sup>103</sup> The HABE, as a result of its cooperation agreement with national organizations, also organized meetings

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<sup>99</sup> *Magyar Hirlap* (1 June 1996) 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Magyar Hirlap* (26 June 1997) 1.

<sup>101</sup> The MWF received 1 million HUF (~3500 USD) for a 6 month-long defense-policy course from the government. *Magyar Hirlap* (26 June 1997) 1.

<sup>102</sup> "Amit a HABE-rol tudni kell" Information Sheet of HABE.

<sup>103</sup> HABE has had elective classes concerning security policy at the Debrecen University and Miskolc University since 1996. *Annual Report of HABE* (Budapest, 2001).

between civil organizations and leaders of national armed organizations such as the military, police and border guards.

Although this NGO made remarkable efforts in disseminating information about security-related topics, including military issues, its activity rarely included academic analysis or adviser roles. Furthermore, generally active or retired officers contributed to its activity. Consequently, it could encourage civilians dealing with security and military, but could not itself perform think tank roles since it lacked independent highly qualified experts and/or orders from potential consumers such as members of Parliament, parliamentary committees, MFA or MOD.

Briefly, the middle of the 1990s was the time for establishing new NGOs in the academic field. These NGOs were dominated by military personnel and/or politicians whose goal was to support Hungarian integration in NATO and encourage civilians to deal with security-related topics. In other words, since alternative approaches to security<sup>104</sup> and the military did not support the potential consumers, instead of officially existing approaches, new methods were found to convey opinions to the general public. Only the CSDSF fulfilled advisory roles with politicians, partly using its own and partly the knowledge of contracted experts.

To summarize, the horizontal aspect of CMR developed in the middle of the 1990s during the second freely elected government. There were not just simply more actors but their networks became richer in some degree, and their activity more diverse. As the military-related civil society developed, differentiation became increasingly obvious. The protestors remained independent from the state and political parties and could utilize the activities of volunteers and international advocacy networks. They influenced the state to make clear statements on certain issues. Other sections of the civil organizations strongly depend on the state. These organizations fulfilled partly integrator roles, avoiding social tensions in the ex-military communities, and partly advocator and educator roles on defense- and military-related matters. Nevertheless, the social-military

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<sup>104</sup> Important to note is that highly qualified experts dealt with particular security-related topics at universities, at the Hungarian Academy of Science, and most regularly at the Hungarian Institution of Foreign Affairs. Strictly military and other armed organizations' issues was mainly not their concern. Highly qualified military experts, such as military personnel, depended principally on their superiors, so alternative opinions could be published at risk.

gap was not eliminated and seemed likely to remain for a long time. Think tank activities and alternative evaluations of military issues did not, or at least, rarely occurred. Consequently, civilian society control over the military, and especially defense-related bureaucracy, was miniscule.

## **V. STATE DOMINANCE AND WEAKENING CIVIL INFLUENCE, 1998-2002**

The dominant political and military theme in Hungary for 1998 was the preparation for NATO enlargement. The consolidation of democratic CMR continued and reasonable hopes emerged on account of the foreseeable membership in NATO, the country's improving economic performance, and the increasing defense budget. Although the civil involvement in military-related discussions was increasing due to NATO-related public and academic discussions as well as the activities of national civilian institutions and local groups concerning military conversion, by the middle of the new governing cycle military personnel strongly dominated the MOD.

This chapter argues that while the number of non-governmental organizations further increased, the vast majority of them remained weak. The state tightened the relationship with the civil society and the political parties and increasingly the governing parties ruled civil society. Although the MOD policy reflected the role of NGOs during the introduction of military reform, the communication of the MOD with military-related NGOs became selective and typically one-way, from the ministry to the NGOs. The MOD became reluctant to communicate with NGOs, which represented different values and alternate opinions compared to the government.

### **A. LEADING CMR ISSUES**

The continuity of the process in CMR did not seem to be interrupted even with the surprising results of the parliamentary elections when the social-liberal coalition lost the election. The former opposition parties FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Party (FIDESZ-MPP) and FKGP (Independent Small Holders Party) formulated a new right-of-center governing coalition. FIDESZ dominated the coalition but, as a result of the coalition agreement, the FKGP nominated the Minister of Defense.

There was no doubt that the lack of defense-related expertise in the FKGP, when the country was preparing to join NATO, could result in problems. Consequently, the new political leadership in the MOD did not change the most important personnel dealing with the defense policy, headed by Istvan Gyarmati. Non-Small Holder Party expert civilians, such as the former FIDESZ politician Tamas Waschler, became the

administrative state secretary in the ministry. All together, five out of the seven top leaders of the MOD were civilians and expertise was strengthened under the FKGP political leadership.

The new government was basically concerned with the same set of important CMR issues as its predecessor. These were NATO enlargement-related modifications to the Hungarian CMR<sup>105</sup>, the integration of the MOD and the GS, and reforming the military. The intention was to have a smaller but more capable organization. NATO encouraged Hungary to solve quickly and effectively all related problems. Although political parties agreed that these were all important issues, the domestic political dynamics and the still existing financial constraints did not support rapid solutions.

Hungarian political life started to become so complex that for a time even NATO was not able to press the parties involved to cooperate.<sup>106</sup> The modification to the constitution concerning the right of parliament vs. government using and deploying forces became exclusively a domestic political matter and was not considered to be a CMR problem.

The integration of the MOD and the GS, another relevant issue, was much more an actual civil-military debate. Nevertheless, it was not isolated from political rivalry. The center of this dispute was the place and role of the chief of the GS and the administrative secretary. The possible concepts with extensive academic involvement were worked out under the previous government but the new government had to make a decision about it. This decision making resulted in a severe conflict between the administrative state secretary and the chief of staff. During the first round, the chief of staff, General Ferenc Vegh, was replaced.<sup>107</sup> The administrative state secretary, Tamas Wachslar, hoped that an easier solution would be reached with the new chief of staff, but this did not happen. After long standing debates, the new chief of staff, General Lajos

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<sup>105</sup> NATO strongly supported an amendment to the constitution extending the right to the executive power to use and deploy forces. At the same time, the relationship was deteriorating between the governing coalition and the opposition because the governing parties continuously acted much more harshly against the opposition than was usual during the last eight years "Brüsszel az alkotmánymódosítást szükséges feltételnek tartja" Magyar Hírlap (3 December 1998) 4.

<sup>106</sup> "Ellenzéki indokok NATO-követeknek" Magyar Hírlap (3 December 1998) 3.

<sup>107</sup> "Magyarország NATO-tag" Heti Világkaszag (25 December 1999).

Fodor, successfully built a political coalition<sup>108</sup> and was supported by the GS. Consequently the administrative state secretary had no other choice but to resign.<sup>109</sup>

Technically, the integration was finally resolved in the fall of 2001.<sup>110</sup> At last there was an opportunity to diminish the parallel working functions in the formerly separated GS and MOD and reduce the organizations. Opportunities also existed to improve transparency of the military for civilian leaders in the MOD and also for politicians. However, it required civilian experts also, since when the integration technically occurred, former military people were again in top positions in the MOD, except for the minister, the political state secretary, and the chief of the ministerial cabinet. None of them had previous military-related experience.

The lack of civilian experts has continued to be the hallmark of the Hungarian CMR even after a decade of transitioning. Basically, there are few civilians who understand military-related issues, and personnel change quite frequently. New people come for a short time; and experienced people leave the MOD mainly for political reasons when newly elected governments take office.<sup>111</sup> People leave also because of salary problems in the lower positions. Nevertheless, the situation was better ten years after the regime changed.

First, some civilians have continued to deal with security-related issues mainly in the parliamentary parties. In spite of the changes in the political parties in power, they have learned much and have become experts.<sup>112</sup> Second, senior military personnel who can give advice to the civilian leaders are much more trusted now. However, this cooperation has resulted in coalition building which has not always been functional in the

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<sup>108</sup> Mihály Bak, "A honvédség útja a leapülés felé" Világgazdaság (Summer 2000) [www.vilaggazdasag.hu/mellekl/egyeb/rendszerualto/cikk07.sht](http://www.vilaggazdasag.hu/mellekl/egyeb/rendszerualto/cikk07.sht).

<sup>109</sup> "Haderő-átalakítási viták: Csillagosok Haboruja" Heti Világgazdaság (9 September 2000).

<sup>110</sup> [http://www.honvedelem.hu/Miniszterium\\_index.php](http://www.honvedelem.hu/Miniszterium_index.php).

<sup>111</sup> Building expertise within the bureaucracy has generally been one of the crucial problems. Zoltan Miklosi, a Freedom House expert highlighted: "Low salaries and career uncertainties due to political influence, however, have resulted in a considerable degree of brain drain from the civil service to the private sector." In: Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, ed., *Nation in Transit, 2001: Civil Society Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and Newly Independent States* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002) 202.

<sup>112</sup> Exceedingly the members of Defense Committee of the Parliament continuously dealt with military issues longer than a governing cycle.

formation of a capable military. A. A. Bebler described this feature of post-communist countries in transition:

In the officer ranks the closeness to or known sympathies for a certain political party have (again) become an important or even the principal criterion for promotion or sacking – at the expense of the personal competence, professional knowledge, skills and achievements.<sup>113</sup>

However, what Bebler wrote was not strictly true in Hungary. The political orientation, or to be more correct, the loyalty to a certain political party has been considered a source of trustworthiness during the permanent reorganization of the military, which has involved significant transfers of property from the military to state-owned and private companies since the beginning of the transformation.

At the same time, there have been functional sides of this coalition building in relation to the competition for state and international resources. This competition required the military and civilian authorities to fully cooperate with each other on the one hand, and on the other hand, it was important because of the typical weak position of the MOD.

Ultimately, the greatest civil-military debates about civil society involvement occurred around the time of the newest military reform. Military reform was unavoidable after Hungarian capabilities were seriously criticized<sup>114</sup> and after the Kosovo crisis which demonstrated the weakness of the Hungarian military. This weakness was embodied by amortized and/or non-NATO compatible technical assets and non-properly trained personnel as a consequence of the permanently under-financed organization.<sup>115</sup> The government ordered a strategic review of the military, and as a result, the MOD developed an ambitious reform plan. The MOD considered a reform lasting ten years, which touched upon virtually all segments of the military including structure, size, dislocation of units, characteristics of the forces, leadership, human policy institutions, life and working conditions, training, and technical modernization.<sup>116</sup> Obviously, such a

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<sup>113</sup> A. A. Bebler, 75.

<sup>114</sup> Jeffrey Simon, “The New NATO Members: Will They Contribute?”  
<http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/forum160.html>.

<sup>115</sup> Tibor Kompa, „Jön majd az ötödik”, Magyar Narancs  
<http://www.manacs.hu/legfrissebb.tdp?azon=0026nagyitas>.

<sup>116</sup> Reform 2000-2010: Átalakul a haderő (Transforming the Military) (Budapest: HVK, 2000).

reform should have resulted in many connections with the civil sector and with civil society organizations as well.



## B. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

By the end of the 1990s, the legal framework of civil organizations was completed. It reflected the differences in civil society as a result of negotiations between the representatives of civil society and the state. It meant legal differentiation between “common” civil organizations and of those who carried out public duties. This legally formulated solution,<sup>117</sup> delegating state responsibilities to NGOs, and the fact that politicians and state institutions established many NGOs, furthermore the entire situation, in which most of the civil organizations (at least financially) depended on the state (more exactly on the political parties in the parliament) softened the boundary between civil society and the state.

It has also resulted in permanent negotiations and cooperation between the state and an important part of civil organizations in setting an agenda to evaluate the efficiency of activities. At the same time, it also resulted in an assertive government being able to ban and/or discriminate against organizations,<sup>118</sup> which were potentially able to articulate an opinion that did not support the official ideas. However, strong NGOs, such as the Soros Foundation, external supporters such as NATO, the EU, INGOs, and potentially the successfully developing private economy sector, could significantly influence civil society by offering education, training, opportunities for communication and financial support.

Ultimately, the general trend remained the same as in the middle of the 1990s, so the number of NGOs further increased in Hungary. According to official statistics, as many as 61,907 non-governmental organizations were registered in 1999. This number included fully or partly self-organized groups as well. Nevertheless, only approximately one third are continuously active and the annual budget of only 5,000 NGOs exceeds 18,000 USD. Furthermore, interestingly enough, one third of the foundations and a

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<sup>117</sup> 1997/CLVI law on public utilized organizations.

<sup>118</sup> It became obvious when heated debates raised around properties, which were gave to the civil organizations by the state. Parliamentary opposition (except far right MIEP) left the negotiation because of the evident political impartiality. It was basically proved that significant part of the non-profit organizations acted or should act as a stab-in-the back of political parties. “Pártpolitika a civil szektorbanAzok boldogulnak, akik patrónust találnak maguknak” Népszabadság (21 March 2002) About the property-debate see: “[A civil ingatlanok elosztásának vizsgálatát kéri az MSZP](#)” Népszabadság (1 September 2001) “[Vitatott civil ingatlanosztás](#)” Népszabadság (28 August 2001) “[Botrány után új ingatlanosztás](#)” Népszabadság (25 August 2001).

quarter of the associations were in Budapest in 1999 and two thirds of the total non-governmental budget accumulated was also in Budapest. The weak boundary between the state and the civil sector also caused difficulties in estimating the real power of civil society. Some of the public NGOs could act as background organizations of ministries. These organizations represented 2% of the NGOs and they owned 25% of the overall Hungarian NGO-budget.<sup>119</sup>

Naturally, the military-related civil society showed similar features to those generally described. If any changes occurred when compared to the middle of the 1990s, it was with the cooperation that the military extended to the civilian sector as a result of military reform and NATO encouragement. At the same time, the relationship of the state and so the MOD with civil organizations, became more and more coordinated.<sup>120</sup> The willingness of the MOD to collaborate, however, has been quite selective. Those organizations that promoted state initiatives have benefited significantly compared to those which did not. It resulted in a kind of clientism, which has not improved the transparency and accountability of the military and state authorities. Organizations performing these functions have needed alternative financial resources.

### **1. Protest Organizations**

Protest organizations do not rely on state support, but proper communication with the state has been necessary for them to negotiate certain issues important to them. It could be important for the MOD as well as for these social groups. It would have been especially useful concerning the topic, namely compulsory military service vs. all voluntary force, which has enjoyed wider acceptance in society.

In this respect, the relationship between the protestors and the MOD worsened between 1998-2002. Although the protestors found a way to express their beliefs, they were more able to press the opposition parties to formulate and express their opinions than to influence the government's standpoint.

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<sup>119</sup> "Pártpolitika a civil szektorban: Azok boldogulnak, akik patrónust találnak maguknak" Népszabadság (21 March 2002).

<sup>120</sup> Milos Balaban, "Position and Task of Non-governmental Organizations in the Process of Democratic Control of the Armed Forces and Their Support for Achieving a Higher Credibility of Armed Forces in the General Public" (NATO Research Fellowship Project 1997-1999, [www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/f97-99.htm](http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/97-99/f97-99.htm)) 48.

This was a result, on the one hand, of the government's, and especially the FKGP's, strong emotional adherence to compulsory military service as a traditional form of home defense. On the other hand, it was the outcome of a public debate between an active military officer, Major Mihaly Szucs, and the state secretary of the MOD, Istvan Gyarmati.<sup>121</sup> As a matter of fact, the debate which considered the status of the military officer and the secretary in the hierarchy, was a strange incident. The officer had been a member of the HEL because he believed that modernization of the armed forces, including its higher social prestige, required diminishing the compulsory military service.<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless, the outcome of this scandal was that the MOD tried to find a way to punish the major, and for a while was able to, but the HEL, a protest movement, monitored and enforced the rule of law and finally he was able to remain in the service and maintain his unique status in the HEL. This case proved, even in an extraordinary way, the power of the rule of law and the power of a civil organization and publicity in Hungary.

Nevertheless, protest organizations, and other organizations sharing this opinion concerning conscription, were not able to influence the governing coalition's idea about compulsory military service. Representatives of the HEL became persona non grata in the MOD and the organization was not invited to debates on conscription.<sup>123</sup> Additionally, the government started steadily arguing for conscription using emotional, rather than rational arguments,<sup>124</sup> and developed a long-term plan to preserve compulsory military service.<sup>125</sup> The HEL evaluated this situation as a step backwards when compared to the previous government, which at least, as a middle or long-term project, accepted the concept of an all voluntary force.

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<sup>121</sup> The public debate started with Maj. Szucs' article in the Magyar Hirlap. (16 June 1998) 7.

<sup>122</sup> According to ZMNDU's surveys, he was not the only professional soldier who believed it and who had bitter feelings because of the continuous reorganizations of the military.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Henrik Farkas, leader of the HEL. (13 March 2002).

<sup>124</sup> The prime minister claimed tougher military training was important for all young, male citizens. He stated: "We see a bit differently those who did not take military oath..." *Magyar Hirlap* (2 March 2001) The political state secretary went further and said that diminishing compulsory military service was against the nation and undermined the order and the discipline in the military *Kis Újság* (3 March 2000)

<sup>125</sup> The head of the Defense Committee of Parliament, Zsolt Lanyi, said changing compulsory military service would become due in a thousand years. "Vita a sorkötelezettség eltörléséről" *Heti Világgazdaság* (01 April 2000); "Nemzetőrség 2003-tól?" *Népszabadság* (18 October 2001).

The HEL started to act aggressively by using the media and the forthcoming parliamentary elections. This NGO did not just keep the conscription issue on the agenda but from time to time forced political parties to declare their clear opinions about the question of compulsory military service. They organized events with the participation of representatives of political parties and experts, and utilized every media event and internet forums<sup>126</sup> for clarifying the different positions concerning military service. They also advertised poll results, which indicated that a very significant portion of the population favored an all voluntary force. Opposition political parties started to use the same arguments for an all voluntary force against the governing coalition as a result of HEL's influence.<sup>127</sup>

Finally, all political parties clearly stated their position on the question of conscription and all non-ruling parties, except the far right MIEP, argued for the introduction of an all voluntary force during the next governing cycle (2002-2006).<sup>128</sup> The parliamentary elections resulted in a social-liberal governing coalition in April 2002, which committed itself to eliminating compulsory military service.<sup>129</sup>

Besides the HEL, the ALBA Circle also emphasized the need for an all voluntary force, but its activity continued to help young men avoid armed service and represented a wider anti-violence, anti-military activity.<sup>130</sup> The activity of the ALBA Circle influenced the CMR insomuch as it socialized the military, and other officials, for properly handling the fact that citizens could express their alternate opinions in a democracy. This occurred when the ALBA Circle activists protested against violence and war in 2001.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, it was rather a scandal when the ALBA activists placed the "Lethal Star"

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<sup>126</sup> Internet forums are increasingly significant in disseminating free opinions and asking questions in Hungary. The permanent accessibility of the HEL and many other civil organizations are sponsored by the Soros Foundation.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Henrik Farkas, leader of the HEL. (13 March 2002).

<sup>128</sup> Political parties declared their conscription policy on the HEL organized forum. Five parties, none of which were the governing party at that time, stated that an all voluntary force was necessary no later than 2006. <http://www.c3.hu/%7Efarkashe/hel/ny020311.html>.

<sup>129</sup> Minél előbb be kell vezetni a hivatásos haderőt (The all voluntary force has to be set up as soon as possible, said the new Minister of Defense) Népszabadság on line (NOL) (22 May 2002).

<sup>130</sup> see: [www.albakor.hu](http://www.albakor.hu).

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.albakor.hu/faklyas.htm>.

sign next to the NATO logo in the middle of the Hungarian capital during the NATO Foreign Minister's meeting in Budapest on 28-30 May 2001.<sup>132</sup>

## **2. Defense-Culture-Related Organizations: Changing Policy**

Defense-culture-related NGOs significantly relied on state support during the 1990s. However, they were much more independent than the vast majority of different cultural organizations of the MOD and the GS.<sup>133</sup> Although these NGOs were quite fragile, they were mainly able to integrate defense-culture-related activities into local society and carried out their missions and gained the support of the state, local governments, NGOs, and entrepreneurs.

Their negotiations with the MOD and GS were relatively successful during the 1990s and influenced the CMR transformation in a manner similar to how the entire civil society-state relationship was formed. Nevertheless, the very end of that decade also brought about a special solution for state-owned (MOD-GS) military-related cultural organizations. These cultural organizations have had to be more independent in adapting their working mechanism to the “cultural market” just as did their tiny NGO counterparts.<sup>134</sup> The idea came with the latest military reform (reform 2000-2010) and was intended to serve two goals at the same time: reduce the expenses of the MOD and increase the effectiveness of the cultural organizations.

In this transformation, the MOD established three associations. One was the “MOD Cultural Service Association” in 2000.<sup>135</sup> The Associations have been nonprofit organizations implementing the public duties instead of the state. These organizations received those properties (buildings, infrastructures, equipment, etc.) which served as cultural interests and had belonged to the MOD. The activities of the Associations are regulated by law<sup>136</sup> just as are similar organizations, but not necessarily state-established non-profit organizations. Nevertheless, the state (MOD) had to take responsibility for

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<sup>132</sup> NATO-napok Budapestén Nepszabadsag (29 May 2001).

<sup>133</sup> These were most prominently subordinated to the Hungarian Home-defense Forces Cultural and Media Directorate.

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Ret. LTC Jozsef Mucsi, Advisor to the Social and Cultural Affairs Department of the MOD. (11 May 2002).

<sup>135</sup> 16/2000 MOD Decision.

<sup>136</sup> 1997/CLVI Law on Public Utilized Organizations.

financing these institutions during their first two years. Later, the Associations have to be able to work effectively with market circumstances.

The duties of the MOD Cultural Service Association have covered cultural and welfare activities, which have had to provide services to military personnel and to the civilian population as well in 31 cities. The Association has had to cooperate with other state (ministries), churches, local (local governments<sup>137</sup>, schools, museums) and NGO (patriot associations, club) organizations.<sup>138</sup> The MOD has financed the previously self-organized groups, as well as being able to support self-organized home-defense-related cultural initiatives via this new Association.<sup>139</sup>

Although the MOD was influenced by the earliest self-organized NGOs to find a solution to support maintaining the home-defense-culture, it also acted under the serious financial constraints. The ministerial decision concerning cultural institutions probably will improve the social-military relations via associations, but it is still a question whether in the future these associations could serve a parallel function building society-military relations and strengthening military cohesion, or has it been only a short-term solution for the MOD.

### **3. Think Tanks and Educators**

The development of the rather academic dimension of the horizontal aspects of CMR continued after 1998. At the same time, this development was controversial. New NGOs were established, which focused on, just as did the earlier established ones, education and conference organization. The research activities remained in government-controlled institutions, in which loyalty was strongly recommended, or occasionally, in the hands of some individual scientists at universities. Furthermore, strictly military-related research activity remained inside the military or former military personnel dealt with it in the CSDSF and the HABE. Consequently, the NGOs' educator and

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<sup>137</sup> Important to note is that local governments increasingly depend on the national government because the proportion of the personal income taxes they could control declined remarkably. It was 50% in 1992, 30% in 1995, 15% in 1999 and then it was reduced to 5% in 2000. Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, ed., *Nation in Transit* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001) 202.

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Ret. LTC Jozsef Mucsi, advisor to the Social and Cultural Affairs Department of the MOD. (11 May 2002).

<sup>139</sup> The Association advertised financial opportunities for NGOs serving home-defense cultural goals. [www.honvedelem.hu/cikk.php?cikk=8429](http://www.honvedelem.hu/cikk.php?cikk=8429).

communicator activity (mainly on behalf of state policy) influenced the CMR, rather than their alternative approaches. Therefore, the analysis of the military-related topics and the number of expert civilians, who understand military, continued to increase only slowly.

The earlier established think tank and educator NGOs continued their activity among similar circumstances during the early years of the new government. The CSDSF, for instance, developed a version of a national strategic defense concept requisitioned by the MOD.<sup>140</sup> Similarly, the Manfred Wörner Foundation, which became a dominantly educator NGO regarding NATO and EU-related issues, was very active in defense-related education, and most remarkably in cooperation with the association of history teachers.<sup>141</sup>

Although these NGOs have been acting continuously, military-related research was conducted by the military and retired military personnel at government controlled institutions, mainly at the Zrinyi Miklos National Defense University and the Institute for Strategic and Defense Studies, just as before. Furthermore, the situation of the NGOs became more difficult after 2000. It was largely caused by the dependence of NGOs on state support. After the millennium, the impact of the government on NGOs became more significant than previously.<sup>142</sup> The government, and especially the MOD, cut sources and repressed alternative opinions while requiring absolute loyalty. For example, the MOD organized a conference on a new version of compulsory military service and not a single organization or expert invited who might argue against it.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, high-ranking officials occasionally and informally claimed the loyalty of researchers or even negative sanctions against their freedom. Nevertheless, non-state sources worked<sup>144</sup> to some degree and naturally, the parliamentary opposition also encouraged alternative opinions.

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<sup>140</sup> Interview with Péter Deák (12 March 2002).

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Ferenc Horovitz, Executive Manager of MWF. (16 May 2002).

<sup>142</sup> It was recognized not exclusively in the case of defense-related NGOs, but generally. “Pártpolitika a civil szektorban: Azok boldogulnak, akik patrónust találnak maguknak” Népszabadság (21 March 2002).

<sup>143</sup> Conference: *Honvédelem és Nemzetőrség* (31 May 2000).

<sup>144</sup> For instance, the Soros Foundation supported the CSDSF and also the international program concerning conscription-related corruption (organized by Open Society Foundation in 2000).

Although the situation of the aforementioned NGOs worsened, they continued their activities. Also, the cooperation of the new NGOs and the civil-military ties between the military and civilian universities improved.

As far as the new NGOs are concerned, an important initiative was born in Szeged, a city in southern Hungary. The Szeged Center for Security Policy (SCSP) is a joint project of the Municipal Government of the city of Szeged, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the University of Szeged.<sup>145</sup> The founders of the SCSP realized the importance of security-related, including military, matters after two wars in the 1990s that occurred very close to Szeged and after NATO enlargement and the preparations for EU membership. The SCSP as a public NGO could gain state, and also significant local and academic, support from the founders.

The programs of the SCSP have offered security-related conferences, even on sensitive topics, such as conscription, where the institution could preserve its neutrality and the prestigious founders could guarantee the freedom of speech.<sup>146</sup> This NGO also has had educator tasks concerning security and military issues, in cooperation with the University of Szeged, the CSDSF<sup>147</sup>, as well as with state-controlled institutions. It appears to be reliable and effective in light of the information provided by their website. Although the SCSP has not been involved with strictly military-related research activity, its active organizer and educator activity definitely involved civilians on military-related issues.

Another NGO has emerged recently with the goal to encourage Hungarian security-related academic life and academic-political dialogue. The Centre for Euroatlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID), which has started to act as a regional institute for Central Europe and the Balkans, is seemingly focusing on global and regional security problems and brings together politicians, military personnel, and

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<sup>145</sup> <http://www.scsp.hu/eng/index.html>.

<sup>146</sup> <http://www.scsp.hu/eng/index.html>.

<sup>147</sup> In the second semester of the 2000/2001 academic year, the SCSP, in cooperation with the CSDSF, launched a security policy course at the University of Szeged. <http://www.scsp.hu/eng/index.html>.



academics supported by Western institutions.<sup>148</sup> Although the CEID has not conducted independent research or educator duties, it could create a certain culture of open dialogue concerning security, including military-related issues, as a contribution to the further consolidation of Hungarian democratic civil–military relations.

Besides these NGOs, some academics have been dealing with security-related questions in Hungarian universities.<sup>149</sup> Their activities are definitely supported by NATO and their outputs generally have appeared in international forums as well. Nevertheless, their activities are rather individual and rarely touch upon strictly military issues. Consequently, their influence on the CMR has been confined and has not affected such issues as transparency of the military, the “governmentalization” of the conscription issue, or the integration of the MOD and GS.

Nevertheless, the relationship between the military and civilian universities improved. The MOD completed a cooperation contract with the Budapest University of Technology and Economics in November 2001<sup>150</sup> and the University of Pecs in May 2002.<sup>151</sup> It promoted the relationship between the society and the military. The contracts concern the further education of military officers in different fields, which were undoubtedly important. Nevertheless, the problem of a lack of civilian research projects, improving the transparency of the military and increasing the number of civilian experts remained.

Briefly, disseminating information about the new security agenda and the military in the society has remained more typical than providing free, alternative non-governmental opinions under the third freely elected government. Furthermore, the assertive, one way communication of the MOD, and to some degree, the entire government, made it difficult for the think tank and educator NGOs to influence the

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<sup>148</sup> The first remarkable event organized by the CEID was a conference “New Security Policy System in Europe” (18-19 March 2002). Telephone interview with Sebestyén Gorka, Director of the CEID (15 May 2002).

<sup>149</sup> Exp.: László Valki (Professor of International Law), ELTE University, Zsolt Rostoványi (Professor of International Relations) Budapest University of Economics and Public Administration.

<sup>150</sup> Együttműködési szerződés a Műegyetemmel [www.honvedelem.hu/cikk.php\\_cikk=6920](http://www.honvedelem.hu/cikk.php_cikk=6920).

<sup>151</sup> MTI (2 May 2002) [www.mti.hu](http://www.mti.hu).

CMR. Nevertheless, the potential source of future civilian experts increased as a result of the appearance of related topics in more and more areas.

In summary, the number of horizontal actors in CMR increased in Hungary between 1998-2002. To be more exact, the number of cultural and educational NGOs increased, while the think tank and protestor organizations remained at the same level. What is probably more important is that the actual influence of the military-related civil society on the CMR improved only in a particular sense. NGOs communicated military-related matters such as NATO membership, security policy, military reform, and home-defense traditions more intensively, and the connection between civilian universities and the military improved. Nevertheless, the open dialogue between the military-related civil society and state officials did not improve, or rather declined, under the third government, while government influence on non-government actors increased. This influence was restrictive in the case of protestors and selected, earlier prosperous think tank and educator NGOs, while this influence was encouraging in the case of home-defense culture-related NGOs under the conservative government.

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## VI. CONCLUSION

To summarize, the consolidation of democratic civil-military relations calls for enhancing the horizontal actors of CMR as a normatively integral part of a democratic system. The development of the horizontal aspect of CMR can improve the democratic quality of civil-military relations and could benefit the state defense policy and thus the military as well. This thesis identified five types of military-related NGOs (INGO, union-like, research and educator, cultural, and protest organizations) and the media as horizontal actors in CMR. This aspect of CMR has received less attention so far, but without active civil society participation inherent problems of CMR of transitional democracies, such as a low level of transparency, lack of civilians, and the society-military gap cannot be solved.

Horizontal actors have to be highlighted because development of the civil society, especially a part of it, which geared towards the military, just slowly emerging in post-communist countries. In these countries, civic tradition is not as strong as generally in matured democracies and civil societies primarily deal with social-economic difficulties and just slightly focus on military- and/or defense-related matters. Enhancing the military-related civil society in Central and Eastern Europe is especially difficult after the Cold War because the public attitude generally has been skeptical or apathetic toward the military and the military participation ratio has been declining. It has been the case in Hungary, where additionally, as an output of the former authoritarian regime, the military was alienated from the society.

The Hungarian democratic civil-military relations have developed significantly in the last twelve years. The CMR-related structures and procedures underwent a remarkable learning process during three governing cycles. Nevertheless, the civil society component of the Hungarian CMR received less attention from experts and (according to the description of three types of the NGOs) its development was slow and controversial.

The development of the horizontal aspect of CMR has been slow in accordance with the general rule of the democratic transition, in which the political and legal transformation is the most rapid, the economic changes need more time, and social

changes require probably new generations.<sup>152</sup> The polemic nature of the development of the horizontal actors in the Hungarian CMR is linked to the strong dependence on state financial resources. The result is that most of the military-related NGOs serve the military and the state and hardly control it. The relevance of the problem is higher considering the lack of civilians in these NGOs. Nonetheless, the development of the military-related civil society can be more rapid as a consequence of the country's economic improvement and the Euro-Atlantic integration.

The civil society was involved in creating the foundations of democratic civil-military relations as a part of the new, democratic political system at the beginning of the transition. Nevertheless, there were not many civil organizations geared towards the military in the early 1990s. However, the legal foundation of establishing NGOs was set up at that time. Later on, the number of the non-governmental organizations continuously has increased but strongly depended on the state subvention. This development was slightly reduced by the law<sup>153</sup> in 1996, which gave the opportunity to citizens deciding freely to give one percent of the income tax to NGOs. The military-related civil society differentiated legally and in practices during the last five years. The legal differentiation occurred in 1997 when the parliament adopted a law,<sup>154</sup> which created a category for NGOs whose activity promotes the "public interests." This development promoted those organizations that communicate state-accepted information about the military and defense policy. The obvious practical differentiation happened during the latest military reform in 2000, which placed cultural organizations out of the MOD-GS and organized them as NGOs.

Although the state influence on military-related civil society was significant, the horizontal actors (protestors, cultural, and research and/or educational organizations) have also affected the Hungarian CMR:

Protest organizations, which illegally existed during late communism, could continue their work legally and publicly. They spread out their beliefs and information

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<sup>152</sup> Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans*, (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 1998) 11.

<sup>153</sup> 1996 / CXXVI. Law (<http://www.civil.info.hu/>).

<sup>154</sup> 1997/CLVI Law.

about the military and defense. They influenced conscription-related debates and continuously monitored the military and defense bureaucracy and socialized it to be under civilian control. They also influenced the state to make clear statements on certain issues utilizing the activities of volunteers and international advocacy networks. The protestors remained independent from the state and political parties. Nevertheless, they had some difficulties in communicating with governments, especially under the third government because of the lack of willingness on the state side.

Cultural, researcher and educator NGOs have strongly depend on the state. Cultural organizations fulfilled partly integrator roles, minimizing social tensions due to the growth of ex-military communities, and also promoted defense- and military-related matters. Although these organizations developed the social-military relations in some degree the elimination of the social-military gap seems to remain a long-term task. Furthermore, the changed structure of cultural NGOs (after the MOD created relatively large cultural NGOs in 2000) resulted a situation, which mixed two roles in the ministry-made NGOs: integrating the military to the society and improving the cohesion of the military. The effectiveness of this decision is not clear today.

Non-governmental military and defense-related research and education had no tradition in Hungary, thus these activities have emerged slowly. The direct educational function of NGOs has improved a lot especially after joining NATO. Nevertheless, think tank activities and alternative evaluations of military issues have not been done, except rarely. Consequently, civilian society control over the military, and especially defense-related bureaucracy, has been miniscule.

The horizontal dimension of the Hungarian CMR has undergone a long and complex learning process. Today tendencies are promising because these organizations are more diverse than earlier and the emerging economy could provide additional resources for them. Nevertheless, the state support for improving this activity remained very important but it calls for considering increasingly democratic values instead of short-term political party benefits. Furthermore, the status today of the defense- and military-related civil society calls for promotion from NATO and the European Union as well. It would be important increasing the attractiveness this field and as a result the

(non-political) civilian participation in it, which could be the basis of the improvement of the quality of democratic civil-military relations.

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